

THE CONCEPT OF *JIHĀD* ACCORDING TO SAYYID QUTB IN HIS *FĪ ZILĀL*
AL-QUR'ĀN

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DECLARATION

I hereby declare that this thesis has been written by myself and does not represent the work of any other person.

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ABSTRACT

Sayyid Quṭb (1906-1966) is one of the most outstanding writers on Islamic thought of the twentieth century. His interest in literature dominated the early stages of his career until he switched of to writing for an Islamic cause.

Quṭb wrote many books and his commentary on the Qur'ān entitled *Fī Zilāl al-Qur'ān* is considered his masterpiece. This thesis attempts to provide a comprehensive view of Sayyid Quṭb's ideas about *jihād* as elaborated in *Fī Zilāl al-Qur'ān*. Chapter One is devoted to a study of Quṭb's life, from being a controversial secular writer to the Islamic worker that he was until his death. Chapter Two deals with the background to the writing of *Fī Zilāl al-Qur'ān*, including his early interest in the study of the Qur'ān, and the compilation and general features of *Fī Zilāl al-Qur'ān*. In this chapter also, his approach to *tafsīr* in theory and as it was applied in *Fī Zilāl al-Qur'ān* is examined. Chapter Three, the main body of the thesis, deals with Quṭb's views on *jihād* as elaborated in *Fī Zilāl al-Qur'ān*, including the nature and aims of *jihād*, the characteristics of the *mujāhidīn*, the reward of *jihād* and the relationship between Muslims and unbelievers. The thesis concludes with an assessment of the significance and importance of Quṭb's thought on the subject of *jihād*.

TRANSLITERATION

The transliteration of Arabic words is according to the following alphabetical substitution:

ا - ' (omitted at the beginning of a word)	ط - t
ب - b	ظ - z
ت - t	ع - °
ج - j	غ - gh
ح - h	ف - f
خ - kh	ق - q
د - d	ك - k
ذ - dh	ل - l
ر - r	م - m
ز - z	ن - n
س - s	ه - h
ش - sh	و - w
ص - s	ي - y
ض - d	

The diphtongs are written: ay (عَيْنٍ)

aw (أَوْ)

The three short vowels are represented by *a* for the *fatha*, *i* for the *kasra* and *u* for the *damma*.

The long vowels are represented by *ā*, *ū*, *ī*.

The *tā marbūṭa* is represented by *at* when in construct and omitted at the end of the word.

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INTRODUCTION

The twentieth century continues to witness the phenomenon of widespread Islamic decadence suffered by Islamic countries all over the world. Furthermore, Muslim societies are suffering from underdevelopment and an economic dependency on the West. Therefore, many Muslim scholars throughout this century have devoted much of their efforts to reviving the concern of Muslims about Islam in order to face the challenges within Muslim society. They recognized that, as in the golden era of Islam, *jihād* could once again be used as a valuable tool to achieve an Islamic revival. Of the many Muslim scholars in the twentieth century, Sayyid Quṭb is one of the leading figures who have seriously propagated the importance of *jihād*. However, he believes that some Muslims, not to mention non-Muslims, lack an understanding of and are misinformed concerning the basic principle of *jihād*, its applicability and requirements, especially within the context of the twentieth century. This thesis attempts to explore Quṭb's thoughts on this subject in his famous work *Fī Zilāl al-Qur'ān*.

The *Zilāl* has been chosen because, of the many works which Quṭb has produced, the *Zilāl* - which has been translated into several other languages - is considered his masterpiece. Quṭb was a controversial writer who later became a popular figure in Islamic society. The *Zilāl* was written by Quṭb after nearly 20 years' involvement in propagating and writing about Islamic affairs. Thus, this work is the product of his mature thought.

The *Zilāl* was written at a time when Qutb and other members of the *Ikhwān* were undergoing severe tribulations under Nasser's regime, a confrontation which he said was one between Islam and *jāhiliyya*. Therefore, the contents of the *Zilāl* are undoubtedly dominated by the theme of *jihād*. This situation greatly influenced the aim, style and presentation of his writing. In addition, the *Zilāl* is partly a compilation and composition of the main ideas contained in his previous works such as *al-Taṣwīr al-Fannī fī al-Qur'ān*, *Mashāhid al-Qiyāma*, *Amrīkā allatī Ra'aytu*, *al-ʿAdāla al-Ijtimaʿiyya fī al-Islām*, *al-Salām al-ʿĀlamī wa-al-Islām* and others. For this reason, Chapter One is devoted to Qutb's life, education, and literary background, and their influence on the *Zilāl*. There follows a brief discussion on the economical and political scenario of Egypt in order to determine its significance and influence on his thought.

It has been claimed that the difference between the *Zilāl* and other *tafsīrs* is due to its powerful words and the relevancy of its discussion to current issues in every verse. Boulatta claims, "....his [Qutb's] distinction is his powerful style and his latterly uncompromising insurgent attitude and bold frankness that led to his long incarceration, and eventually, to his trial and execution." The method adopted by Qutb in the writing of *Zilāl* makes it unique and different from other *tafsīrs*. This method is what we examine here.

In this thesis, we discuss Qutb's thought on *jihād* as elaborated in *Fī Zilāl al-Qur'ān*, since the *Zilāl* serves as the culmination of his mature thought on the subject.

I have tried to collate the author's main thoughts and themes on various issues concerning *jihād* which are scattered throughout the *Zilāl*, and reorganize them under relevant headings. However, Qutb's other books are also referred to when there is a need for this. The topics or themes chosen are based on the classical divisions in discussing *jihād* employed by the earliest jurists. Qutb's interpretation of the verses regarding *jihād* are also evaluated in order to ascertain the similarity to the meaning of *jihād* as introduced and understood by the earliest Muslims. According to many Western writers, Qutb's ideas on *jihād* have been greatly influenced by both previous figures such as Ibn Qayyim and Ibn Kathīr representing the earlier generation, and Ḥasan al-Bannā and al-Mawdūdī in modern times. Therefore, some of their opinions are examined along with Qutb's opinion.

This thesis divides into three chapters. Chapter One is devoted to the life of Sayyid Qutb. Chapter Two discusses the background to the writing of *Fī Zilāl al-Qur'ān*. Chapter Three is divided into five sub-chapters and it is this chapter that forms the main body of the thesis. Finally, I conclude with an assessment of Qutb's thought.

None of the available literature has dealt extensively or exclusively with Qutb's idea of *jihād* which is the focus of this research. For example, Samira Fayyad's *Sayyid Qutb: His Thought and Literature*, focuses on general issues related to Islam such as philosophy, civilization, Islamic concepts and the Islamic movements. *The*

Formative Stages of Sayyid Qutb's Intellectual Career and His Emergence as an Islamic Da'iyah, written by Adnan Ayyub Musallam, is a historical and bibliographical work on Sayyid Qutb. It is a very useful book which has discussed extensively the various stages of Qutb's life and the transformation of his career from a secular orientation to that of an Islamic writer and worker. It also provides some description of his family and literary background, which contributed substantially to the development of Qutb's career, particularly as an Islamic thinker.

Studies on Sayyid Qutb's Fī Zilāl al-Qur'ān written by Sohirin Mohammad Solihin, examines Sayyid Qutb's thought and is closer to this study. Yet he devotes only one chapter of his thesis to discussing *jihād*, and in the rest deals with general issues relating to Islam. Rudolph Peters' book *Islam and Colonialism: The Doctrine of Jihād in Modern History* provides useful information on *jihād* as understood by fundamentalists such as Sayyid Qutb. *Islamic Jihad an Historical Perspective* written by Jamilah Kolocotronis is a study on the theoretical and practical aspects of *jihād* in the twentieth century. However, it renders very limited information about Qutb's view on *jihād*, although it is useful as far as it goes. Ahmad S.Mousalli's *Radical Islamic Fundamentalism* is an ideological and political discussion of the fundamentalist movement represented by Sayyid Qutb. Ahmad Fā'iz's *Ṭarīq al-Da'wa Fī Zilāl al-Qur'ān* is also useful for understanding Qutb's view on *jihād*. However, this work is only a compilation of the texts in the *Zilāl* on the subject of *da'wa* which some have related to the subject of *jihād*, and has little analysis. This thesis benefits from and

utilizes all the material on Qutb and attempts to provide a comprehensive view of Qutb's idea of *jihād* as elaborated in *Fī Zilāl al-Qur'ān*.

CHAPTER ONE: SAYYID QUTB'S LIFE

Family and childhood

Sayyid Qutb Ibrāhīm Husayn Shādhilī was born in Mūshā on the 9th of October 1907 in Asyūt Province, Upper Egypt.¹ It is also known as "Balad al-Shaykh ‘Abd al-Fattāh" in commemoration of one of its respected sons.² He was the second of his mother's six children.³ He came from a middle class family for whom, like other village people at that time, farming was the main source of income. His father was a respected man among the village inhabitants because he had considerable lands which he had inherited from his forefathers. In spite of that, he was forced to sell some of this land in order to support his family at a time when the economy of Egypt was in crisis.⁴ His father was an active member of the local branch of the Nationalist Party (*al-Hizb al-Waṭanī*). His house was a meeting place during World War 1 for party members. He is said to have been a very religious, responsible and kind person who taught all these virtues to his children not through precepts but by concrete deeds. All his sacrifices and invaluable guidances were noted by Sayyid Qutb in his book *Mashāhid al-Qiyāma* "Scenes of Resurrection":⁵

¹ Al-Khālidi, Ṣalāh ‘Abd al-Fattāh, *Sayyid Qutb: min al-Mīlād ilā al-Istishād*, Dār al-Qalam, Damascus, 1994, p.15.

² *Ibid*, p.25.

³ *Ibid*, p.40.

⁴ *Ibid*, p.33.

⁵ *Ibid*, p.34-35. See also Husayn, ‘Abd al-Bāqī Muḥammad, *Sayyid Qutb: Ḥayātuhu wa- Adabuhu*, Dār al-Wafā, Cairo, 1986, p.18.

When I was a young child you imprinted on my senses the fear of the Day of Judgement. You never scolded me or restrained me, but your daily life was an example of a man who was always aware of the Day of Accounting.....The image of your reading of the *Fātiḥa* every evening after we finished supper, and the dedication of the prayer to the souls of your fathers in the final abode, are vividly imprinted in my imagination.....⁶

Qutb's mother, Fāṭimah, came from a prominent family in the village.⁷ Like his father, she was also undoubtedly an indispensable figure in Qutb's life. The book entitled *al-Atyāf al-Arbaʿa* "The Four Phantoms," written by Qutb himself, his brother Muḥammad, and his sisters Ḥamīda and Amīna, was an anthology dedicated to her memory.⁸ In her life, education of her children was the main concern, regardless of whether it was religious or secular. Basically, it was this kind of mentality that made her send Qutb to Cairo to live with her brother Aḥmad Husayn ʿUthmān to pursue his studies.⁹ Thus, special tribute was made by Qutb to his mother in his book *al-Taṣwīr al-Fannī fī al-Qurʾān* "Artistic Portrayal in the Qurʾān," where he writes:

...when you sent me to the primary school in the village your greatest wish was that Allah might open my heart to memorize the Qurʾān and that he might provide me with a melodious voices so that I could chant it for you.... I have memorized the Qurʾān and fulfilled a part of your wish.¹⁰

Qutb grew up with the gentle and loving care of his mother and the guidance of his father in the best family atmosphere. As a strong religious family, his parents

⁶Qutb, *Mashāhid*, p.5.

⁷Kashmīrī, Sayyid Bashīr Aḥmad, *Sayyid Qutb*, Dār al-Fadīla, Cairo, 1986, p.29.

⁸Musallam, Adnan Ayyub, "The Formative Stages of Sayyid Qutb's Intellectual Career and His Emergence as an Islamic Dāʿiyah," unpublished Ph.D Thesis, University of Michigan, 1983, p.70.

⁹Al-Khālīdī, *Sayyid Qutb*, p.71.

¹⁰Qutb, *Taṣwīr*, p.5.

assured that his mental and physical development were not tainted with immoral behaviour. He was never allowed to play outside with other children lest his morals get spoiled and his clean clothes become dirty.¹¹

At the age of six Quṭb enrolled in the newly-established elementary school in the town instead of the traditional '*kuttab*'. This probably marks the beginning of his educational development where he had shown exceptional ability in his lessons.¹² At this time also he showed his commitment by memorizing the Qur'ān. He initiated the creation of a group of elementary school pupils to compete with those of the *kuttāb* in the Qur'ān-memorisation exercises which he used to win.¹³ It is stated that Quṭb memorized the whole Qur'ān at the age of ten.¹⁴ At school, his school headmaster also contributed in Quṭb's development individually and educationally. He was aware of Quṭb's talent and ability in schooling. He took care of Quṭb's welfare and lent him two political books, one by a political prisoner, Thābit al-Jurjānī, and the other by a nationalist historical prisoner, Muḥammad al-Khudārī, which had an impact in Quṭb's interest in literature afterwards.¹⁵ Besides school, he gained and widened his knowledge by attending religious lectures, on subjects such as *tafsīr*, in the mosque, which were delivered by Azharī scholars who came to teach the inhabitants of the

¹¹ Al-Khālīdī, *Sayyid Quṭb*, p.61.

¹² *Ibid*, p.58.

¹³ *Ibid*, p.59.

¹⁴ *Ibid*, p.60.

¹⁵ *Ibid*, p.65.

village.¹⁶ He also gained knowledge from a collection of books he bought from "Uncle Ṣāliḥ", a book-seller who visited the town in certain months of year. His interest in reading was such that if he could not afford to buy a book he would borrow it.¹⁷

Qutb left his home town to pursue secondary education in Cairo, where he lived with his maternal uncle Aḥmad Husayn ʿUthman who was a teacher and journalist. He was enrolled in a preliminary teachers' training school known as *Madrasat al-Muʿallimīn al-Awwaliyya*.¹⁸ Here, Qutb's ability and talent in Arabic language and literature enabled his poems and essays to be published in the magazines *al-Hayāt al-Jadīda* and *al-Balāgh*. His literary career became even better when he managed to build a good relationship with al-ʿAqqād, the well-known journalist, through his uncle. His uncle and al-ʿAqqād were friends and active members of the Wafd Party. He then became a fan and follower of al-ʿAqqād and read a lot of his books. Qutb's interest in philosophy and psychology, especially in psychoanalysis, during his early literary career may well have been the result of his mentor's influence. Qutb admitted the contribution of al-ʿAqqād which helped him to depart from the conservative styles in poetry which were advocated by Muṣṭafā Luṭfī al-Manfalūṭī (1876-1924) and Muṣṭafā Ṣādiq al-Rāfiʿī (1880-1937).¹⁹ Through his uncle and al-ʿAqqād, he then joined the staff of *al-Balāgh*, the mouthpiece of the Wafd Party.

¹⁶*Ibid*, p.63. See also Ḥamūda, ʿĀdil, *Sayyid Qutb: min al-Qarya ilā al-Mishnaqa*, Dār al-Khayyāl, Qāhira, 1996, p.33.

¹⁷Al-Khālidi, *Sayyid Qutb*, p.65.

¹⁸*Ibid*, p.74.

¹⁹Musallam, *Formative Stages*, p.77.

There he worked on the editorial board and contributed literary and political articles. Sayyid Qutb's long apprenticeship under al-°Aqqād earned him much contempt from literary opponents who always saw it as intellectual and literary servitude and lack of originality. However, in 1948 Qutb found his own style and departed from the style which had been promoted by al-°Aqqād. He undoubtedly benefited from his mentor but he never copied him.²⁰

He was admitted to Dār al-°Ulūm in Cairo in 1929. He was excellent not only in academic but also in non-academic pursuits. He was involved actively in promoting changes and improvements in the educational curriculum. This included the introduction of English language instruction and artistic criticism, the expansion of Arabic language and religious studies, as well as Hebrew education in a proposed preparatory year at the college.²¹ In literature, he delivered a public lecture on poetry and criticism at the auditorium of Dār al-°Ulūm in 1932 which was later published under the title of *Muhimmat al-Shā'ir fī al-Ḥayāt wa Shī'r al-Jīl al-Ḥādīr* "The Mission of the Poet in Life and the Poetry of the Present Generation." This work was regarded as his first major work on poetry and criticism. His poems were published in many publications such as *al-Balāgh*, *al-Muqtataf*, *al-Risāla*, *Ṣaḥīfat Dār al-°Ulūm*, *al-Wādī*, *Kawkab al-Sharq* and *Apollo*.²²

²⁰Al-Khālīdī, *Sayyid Qutb*, p.150-151.

²¹*Ibid*, p.76-77.

²²Musallam, *Formative Stages*, p.87.

Literary Career

After he had graduated from Dār al-‘Ulūm in 1933, he was appointed there as a teaching assistant. In 1940, he worked in the Department of Cultural Affairs under the control of the Education Ministry and later became an inspector of schools based in Ḥulwān on the outskirts of Cairo.²³ This did not prevent him from being active in literary activities, especially in literary criticism. His career flourished when he joined *al-Ahrām* where he had the opportunity to review works of literary figures such as al-‘Aqqād, Aḥmad Zakī, Abū Shādī, Ṣāliḥ Jawda and Maḥmūd Abū al-Wafā, among others.²⁴

Qutb's literary criticism also witnessed his involvement in several literary battles with others, including the supporters of al-Rāfi‘ī (1938), Dr. Muḥammad Mandūr (1943), ‘Abd al-Mun‘im Khallāf (1944), Darīnī Khashaba (1943), Ṣalāḥ Dhihnī (1944), Isma‘īl Maḥzar (1946) and some literary experts including al-‘Aqqād, Ṭaha Husayn, Muḥammad Husayn Haykal and others (1947).²⁵ These literary battles were motivated by Qutb's enthusiasm to defend his opinion and sometimes his mentor al-‘Aqqād which featured in his debates with the Apollo Group. According to Musallam, "Qutb's hostility toward the poets of the Apollo group was apparent in his writings. He accused the group of trying to influence the integrity of his critical

²³ Al-Khālīdī, *Sayyid Qutb*, p.85-86.

²⁴ Musallam, *Formative Stages*, p.87.

²⁵ *Ibid*, pp.168 and 182.

reviews...". He further says "He did this in part, in retaliation for Abū Shadī's and the Apollo group's attack on al-ʿAqqād and his poetry in the Apollo review".²⁶ His involvement was also inspired by the desire to contribute towards the advancement and progression of the literary arena in Egypt which is understood from his words, "I am perhaps the first man to rejoice at all these battles in spite of the enmity and tumult that accompanied them, for the enmity of life to me is better than the peace of death, and the tumult of a storm is preferable to the quietness of stagnation."²⁷ Al-Khālīdī states that Qutb's involvement in this battle was also inspired by the desire to demonstrate his ability and to attract others to follow him which manifested itself before he became vigorously involved in Islamic activities.²⁸

Qutb's interest in literary criticism continued in the 1940's. His analytical literary talent was evident with the appearance of his articles in Cairo's leading literary reviews *al-Risāla* and *al-Thaqāfa*. These reviews were later compiled in *Kutub wa Shakṣīyāt* "Book and Personalities" which was published in 1946 and received favorably by the critics. His presence in the literary criticism arena was also marked with the publication of *al-Naqd al-Adabī: Uṣūluhu wa Manāhijuhu* "Literary Criticism: Its Sources and Methods" in 1947. It presented his own method of literary criticism which utilizes all sorts of literary methods, including artistic, historical and

²⁶Musallam, *Formative Stages*, p.88.

²⁷Al-Khālīdī, *Sayyid Qutb*, p.165.

²⁸*Ibid*, p.166.

psychological analyses, when giving a verdict on a literary work.²⁹

Qutb's works were not only restricted to the literature but also dealt with education and socio-economic issues. His works on education include *al-Qaṣaṣ al-Dīnī*, *al-Jadīd fī al-Lughā al-ʿArabiyya*, *Rawḍat al-Tifl* and *al-Jadīd fī al-Mahfūzāt*.³⁰ Qutb took the opportunity when he held the editorship of *al-Fikr al-Jadīd* to demand social and economic changes necessary at that time.³¹ The 1940's, especially after the end of World War II, marked the rise of socio-economic problems in Egypt.³² The British interference in Egyptian politics only added misery to the life of the Egyptians.³³ The British along with various influential groups in Egyptian society such as the Palace, the politicians, the political parties, the entrepreneurs and other social groups were believed to be responsible for the country's corruptions and destructions.³⁴ Sayyid Qutb's dissatisfaction about the country's affairs inspired him to act in order to improve the situation. Besides exposing all these crimes, Qutb also criticized government policies continuously through media channels such as *al-Risāla*, *al-Thaqāfa* and *al-ʿAlām al-ʿArabī*. His activity intensified when he became the editor

²⁹Musallam, *Formative Stages*, p.94.

³⁰*Ibid*, p.96.

³¹*Al-Fikr al-Jadīd* was a weekly journal dealing with social issues, set up by Qutb with seven others in October 1947. See Dunne, J.Heyworth, *Religious and Political Trends in Modern Egypt*, Washington, 1950, p.97.

³²Safran, Nadav, *Egypt in Search of Political Community*, Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1961, p.209.

³³ Details of the British interference in Egyptian politics can be seen in Vatiokotis, P.J., *The History of Modern Egypt*, Weidenfeld and Nicolson, London, 1991, p.333-374.

³⁴*Ibid*, p.333-334.

of *al-Fikr al-Jadīd*.³⁵ In the editorial of the first issue of the journal Sayyid Qutb wrote:

Today we seek to raise the living standard of ten million suffering people of this nation to the level of a lower animal (for while a lower animal gets its satisfaction from food, these people do not), and another eight million to the lowest standard of human living conditions whereby they can get food, clothes and shelter. These two sections in society are the providers of gold to the lazy and idle aristocrats.³⁶

Although it operated for only three months, Qutb and his colleagues managed to make a substantial impact in promoting the improvement of social conditions. As a result of their vigorous efforts, the government's reputation had been significantly undermined. Among their activities were reporting in detail the poor conditions of both city and countryside, accompanied with photographs, and distributing land, especially to those who did not have land, which could be acquired from the fair division of large estates. Qutb's role in *al-Fikr al-Jadīd* was described by Heyworth-Dunne as follows:

He and his agents collected a number of detailed reports on the living conditions of their compatriots and published these with photographs. He has examined the extreme poverty of four or five million *fellahin* and described their way of life to the Egyptians. His courageous approach in this journal puts him in the forefront of those who are advocating a system whereby large estates should be reasonably diminished in size, and the land distributed amongst the completely landless, in order to eliminate destitution. He also advocates legislation regulating the relations between capital and labor, so that workers can get a fairer deal. He believes in encouraging the system of co-operative societies.³⁷

³⁵Safran, *Egypt in Search of Political Community*, p.185.

³⁶Abubakar, Muhammad Auwal, "Sayyid Qutb: A Study of His Critical Ideas", unpublished M.A. Thesis, University of Edinburgh, 1978, p.47.

³⁷Heyworth-Dunne, *Religious and Political Trends*, p.97.

Studying in America

As a result of his activities in the *al-Fikr al-Jadīd*, the government ordered him to leave the country under the pretext of pursuing further education in the United States.³⁸ As an outspoken moralist and critic of anti-Western civilization, he took advantage of the opportunity to examine all spheres of American public life, which he revealed in a series of articles entitled *Amrīkā allatī Ra'aytu* "The America that I saw." His writing was mainly based on his observation of and experience in mingling with Americans while attending courses in many parts of America.³⁹ The task was made easier by the fact that he was not attending courses for any specific degree or qualification.

In his writing he acknowledged America's outstanding and unrivalled achievement in science and technology but criticized their moral and spiritual bankruptcy. For example in Washington in May 1949, he portrayed America as a huge, ridiculous "workshop" which many people called "the new world". However according to Qutb, the Americans were spiritually in crisis.⁴⁰ To him, what he saw was only a human charade devoid of the true meaning of humanity. Qutb described the Americans as an excited herd scrambling and struggling only for lust and money.⁴¹

³⁸Qutb, *Amrīkā*, p.6. See also Al-Khālīdī, *Amrīkā min al-Dākhil bi-Manẓār Sayyid Qutb*, Dār al-Qalam, Dimashq, 1995, p.17-18.

³⁹Al-Khālīdī, *Sayyid Qutb*, p.198.

⁴⁰Al-Khālīdī, *Amrīkā*, p.153. See also Qutb, *Amrīkā*, p.14-16.

⁴¹*Ibid*, p.142.

According to Mussallam,⁴² Qutb's visit to America was a turning point in many aspects of his life. During his stay in America, Qutb began to think seriously about his future career as a writer. In a letter to his friend Anwar al-Ma'dāwī he revealed his intention to actively participate in a movement in his drive to change the society apart from writing. He said,

You are looking forward to seeing me return in order that I take my place in literary criticism! I am afraid to tell you that this will not happen. It would be better if a new literary critic were to emerge, for I am planning to devote the rest of my life to a comprehensive social program (*barnāmaj ijtimā'ī kāmīl*) that will involve the lives and efforts of many....⁴³

His experience in America strengthened his belief that writing is insignificant unless it accompanied by action. Thus he criticized the attitude of people in Egypt and the East who talked more than they should and urged them to act quickly to solve their problems. He insisted that the most worthy goal of his life was to put all the dreams, ideas and principles which he had uttered into practice. In Colorado, he expressed his belief that an idea does not remain in the soul of individuals and generations unless it becomes a system of belief (*'aqīda*). According to him, true belief belongs to those who implement their ideas in their daily lives. That, he argued, is why the words of the Prophets and saints survived and the words of philosophers and thinkers have died.⁴⁴

It was also in America, following the assassination of Ḥasan al-Bannā, the

⁴²Musallam, *Formative Stages*, p.210.

⁴³His full letter to Anwar al-Ma'dāwī which was published by *Majallat al-Kitāb* can be seen in al-Khālīdī, *Amrīkā*, p.157.

⁴⁴Musallam, *Formative Stages*, p.211.

leader of the *al-Ikhwān al-Muslimūn*, in 1948, that Qutb's attitude towards the Islamic movement began to change. He noticed that people of America were jubilant when the news of Ḥasan al-Bannā's death was announced. It was then that he realized how hostile the West was towards the Islamic movement and regretted his failure to keep in contact with Ḥasan al-Banna despite the fact that he had had the opportunity to do so.⁴⁵

Qutb's anti-westernism and anti-Americanism became more pronounced upon his return to Egypt after his publication of an article in *al-Risāla* magazine. According to Musallam, Qutb's short stay in America between 1948-1950 basically confirmed his negative view of the United States and western civilization and strengthened his conviction that the Islamic way of life was the only solution for mankind. Upon his return to Egypt, he adopted a more aggressive approach towards writing and calling people to Islam and fighting against the conditions existing in the country.⁴⁶

His first major Islamic work upon his return was *Ma'rakat al-Islām wa-al-Ra'smāliyya* "The Battle of Islam and Capitalism" which was published in February 1951. The work was an attempt to expose the corruption of the socio-economics and politics of Egypt and the failure of the government to fulfill its duty to needy people. In this book, he clearly denounced the so-called "exploiting tyrants", "professional men of religion" and "hired writers and journalists" and challenged the government

⁴⁵Al-Khālidi, *Sayyid Qutb*, p.318.

⁴⁶Musallam, *Formative Stages*, p.212.

to put them behind bars.⁴⁷ He also accused the government of discouraging the people's efforts to be productive and preventing adequate utilization of human and natural resources. According to him, the state was representing the forces of capitalism rather than the needy masses. Furthermore, these social conditions had proven destructive to human rights and dignity as evident from the miserable state of millions of peasants. Not only that, the situation had in fact destroyed basic human character and conscience, causing moral decadence to the individual.⁴⁸ Finally, he urged every individual in the society to choose Islam as the only solution for all the problems befalling the society. He completely rejected communism and capitalism which had greater influence in the society and accused them of being responsible for causing misery and instability in society.⁴⁹

He insisted that Islam must not be confined merely to places of worship but it must also rule the general community. He insisted that adopting the Islamic way of life did not mean a retreat from civilization into the primitive rule of the desert Arabs. Neither did it mean that *Sharīʿa* would be limited to medieval rules, or that power would be only in the hands of the *shaykhs* and *dervishes*. If Islam succeeded in ruling, it would not be, according to Qutb, as many feared, that women would be oppressed, nor would it discriminate against minorities.⁵⁰

⁴⁷*Ibid*, p.213.

⁴⁸*Ibid*, p.214-215.

⁴⁹*Ibid*, p.215-216.

⁵⁰*Ibid*.

His second major Islamic work after his return from the America was *al-Salām al-ʿĀlamī wa-al-Islām* "The Universal Peace and Islam," published in October 1951. This work was basically influenced by several events in global politics such as the Berlin Blockade Crisis of 1948, the victory of Mao Tse-Tung's forces in China in 1949 and the outbreak of the Korean War in June 1950 leading to military confrontation between America and China. All these events were only an addition to the unending conflict between Western states and the Soviet bloc which was basically responsible for much political turmoil in the world. In response to these events, Qutb said:

As humanity at present is deeply concerned about the problem of world peace, one should ask whether Islam has a constructive opinion on this matter, and what are the solutions it offers. This book is meant to answer this question in detail.⁵¹

Islam is a religion of peace and rejects absolutely any kind of injustice, despotism and corruption. In order to achieve world peace, Islam requires that peace should be first established through individual conscience, at home and in the society.⁵² In Islam, peace is attained when people recognize the power of God and the human being abides by His law of justice, equality and liberty. According to Qutb, one way to establish all these characteristics and God's Sovereignty is by commanding the *jihād* in which eventually peace of conscience, domestic peace, national and international peace can be established.⁵³ Islamic international relations promotes greater tolerance towards human beings and rejects any kind of prejudices such as characterizes all

⁵¹Qutb, *The Universal Peace and Islam*, p.4.

⁵²*Ibid*, p.16, 30, 45.

⁵³*Ibid*, p.72-73.

man-made political systems. He believed that humanity will continue to suffer under corrupted civilization unless an Islamic system is implemented.⁵⁴

He also revealed in this book the reality in which the communist and capitalist camps are competing against each other in order to dominate the world's economic, geographical and human resources. Both camps demonstrated their hostility not only towards one another but also to other systems including Islam. Qutb suggested however, that the existence of both blocs is indispensable in order to maintain international peace. A decisive victory by either of these blocs would jeopardise the world and threaten the Third World nations. He also unveiled his ambitions to see Muslim nations forming an Islamic bloc to serve as a buffer between the two major blocs in order to prevent the outbreak of war.⁵⁵

For most of 1950-51, Qutb devoted his time and energy to call people to Islam and denounce the conditions existing in the country through his books or articles in newspapers and magazines. *Al-Risāla* featured his article on its front page cover which had not been the case in the 1930s and 1940s. In a series of articles, he criticized the ruling members of Egypt and continued to advocate the Islamic way and the need for the establishment of an Islamic bloc. He also attacked America and the West and criticized the rigidity of the institution of al-Azhar in handling the changing society.

⁵⁴*Ibid*, p.74-75.

⁵⁵Musallam, *Formative Stages*, p.220-223. According to Musallam, "In the last chapter of *The Universal Peace and Islam*, entitled "And Now...", Qutb presents his views of world politics in light of the outbreak of the Korean War and the continued confrontation of "the capitalist and communist camps". This controversial chapter appeared in the first edition. Beginning with the third edition (1954), the chapter was deleted".

He urged them to utilize the specific and all encompassing idea of Islam in light of present realities and more importantly to propagate the idea.⁵⁶

He expressed particular concern about Islamic *da'wa* in his works. According to him, Islamic *da'wa* was not the exclusive domain of the Muslim Brotherhood or any other Islamic group. It is the duty of the Muslim *umma* to propagate it. The Muslims should unite behind either Pakistan which was calling for an Islamic economic conference or Iran which demanded independence from the British for itself and for other Muslim countries. Qutb stressed the importance of realizing that Islamic *da'wa* emanates from the conscience of the Muslim *umma* and should be seen as a course for Muslims as a whole regardless of race and nationality.⁵⁷

Relationship with the *al-Ikhwān al-Muslimūn*

It is unclear the exact dates and circumstances of Qutb's formal affiliation with the *Ikhwān* as there was no written document dealing with it unlike many other events in his life. As Musallam concluded Qutb's involvement with *Ikhwān* was accomplished in stages: beginning with the first appearance of his writing in the *Ikhwān*'s publications; then as an admirer and a friend of the movement in the aftermath of the *Ikhwān* guerilla war against the British in the Suez Canal area in late 1951; and finally, as an official member of the *Ikhwān* after the 1952 Free Officers revolt.⁵⁸

⁵⁶Musallam, *Formative Stages*, p.223-225.

⁵⁷*Ibid*, p.224.

⁵⁸*Ibid*, p.228. See also Al-Khālīdī, *Sayyid Qutb*, p.320 and p.322.

Perhaps, two incidents persuaded him to establish relationships with the *Ikhwān*; the assassination of Ḥasan al-Banna and his conversation with Dr. James Heyworth-Dunne, both of which occurred while he was in America. The latter constantly reminded him of the real danger of *Ikhwān* being elected to form a government. According to Qutb, the incidents revealed to him that the *Ikhwān* was regarded as a significant threat to the Zionist movement and western imperialists.⁵⁹

Following the assassination of Ḥasan al-Banna, the leader of *Ikhwān*, in 1948 and the valuable experience he acquired in America, Qutb began to regularly contribute to the *Ikhwān* publications soon after his return to Egypt. His works appeared in *al-Da'wa* of Ṣāliḥ al-ʿAshmāwī, who was a deputy of Ḥasan al-Bannā and *al-Muslimūn* of Saʿīd Ramaḍān, another prominent member of the *Ikhwān*. Qutb became a regular contributor of *al-Muslimūn*; a monthly Islamic review which was established in 1951, writing on various subjects including Islamic history, the Qurʾān and Islamic society until he was arrested in late 1954. His Qurʾānic commentary, *Fī Zilāl al-Qurʾān* "Under the Shade of the Qurʾān" originated from this review.⁶⁰ Qutb's contribution to *al-Da'wa* began soon after his return from America. Most of his articles dealt with social problems in Egypt especially during the British occupation. His criticism intensified in the aftermath of the unilateral abrogation of the Anglo-Egyptian Treaty of 1936 and the Sudan Condominium of 1899 by the Naḥās (*al-Wafd*)

⁵⁹Al-Khālīdī, *Sayyid Qutb*, p.317-320.

⁶⁰Musallam, *Formative Stages*, p.228.

cabinet on 8 October 1951.⁶¹ His support towards the *Ikhwān* became public in November 1951 when he praised them for their courage in fighting against the British and acknowledged *Ikhwān* as the only group in Egypt who sought an armed struggle against the British. He believed that the spirit of Islam which was embedded in every member of the *Ikhwān* was the motivation behind their struggle.⁶²

As early as January 1952 Quṭb was not yet affiliated with the *Ikhwān*. He even considered his relationship with the *Ikhwān* as merely based on friendship, trust and cooperation. He regarded himself as "a friend of the Islamic movement" during the outbreaks of fighting between the Egyptian and the British in the Canal Zone. He also demanded the Supreme Guide of the *Ikhwān* to precisely clarify their stance on this matter in order to resolve any doubt to him in particular and to the public in general. The relationship was further strengthened when the publisher connected with the *Ikhwān*, *Dār al-Ikhwān lil-Ṣiḥāfa wa-al-Ṭibā'a*, sponsored the publication of Quṭb's second printing of *Ma'rakat al-Islām wa-al-Ra'smāliyya* "The Battle of Islam and Capitalism" and the third printing of *al-ʿAdāla al-Ijtimaʿiyya fī al-Islām* "Social Justice in Islam" in April 1952.

On the eve of the "Free Officer's" revolution Quṭb's involvement with the *Ikhwān* became manifest on two occasions. Firstly, he promoted the *Ikhwān's* ideas on tackling the educational problems of Egypt. Secondly, he was directly involved in a meeting between the *Ikhwān* and the Free Officers and its executive army the

⁶¹*Ibid*, p.232.

⁶²*Ibid*, p.233.

Revolutionary Command Council (RCC) before King Faruq was overthrown and the Liberal nationalist regime was launched. A meeting between Qutb and Nasser was also held, according to some sources in Qutb's house four days before the revolution. In this event he was responsible for coordinating the *Ikhwān* contingency plans for the protection of the revolution.⁶³ This, however, did not prevent the leadership of the *Ikhwān* from appointing him as a spokesman of the organisation in the press conference in August 1952 which demanded the release of all prisoners including the *Ikhwān's* members, the nationalists and communists in the wake of the 1952 revolution. This more or less realized the *Ikhwān's* dream to see greater cooperation with the Wafdists and Communists in facing the government. He was also accused of acting as a liaison person between the Communists and the *Ikhwān* during this conflict. Sayyid Qutb played an important role in the early existence of the RCC where he was appointed as a cultural advisor. He was also consulted by Nasser before the formation of the Liberal nationalist regime and it was alleged that Qutb became its Secretary General.

Qutb's common cause with the *Ikhwān* on a variety of subjects contributed greatly to his recruitment into the *Ikhwān's* ranks. His reputation as a highly respected Muslim intellectual and critic was responsible for his appointment as a head of the Propagation of Islam Section, an important section of the organisation. His appointment by Ḥasan Ḥudaybī, the Supreme Guide of the *Ikhwān*, took place during the reshuffle of the Guidance Council Committee, the highest office in the

⁶³*Ibid*, p.236-237.

organisation's administration.⁶⁴

As a leader of the Propagation section, he was in charge of organizing *da'wa* for *Ikhwān* which included supplying the callers (*du'āt*) for speeches as well as lectures inside and outside the *Ikhwān* and a journal publishing Islamic articles for the spiritual, mental and physical guidance of the members. The section was also responsible for preparing a unified curriculum for every school under the *Ikhwān's* administration. He was literally responsible for shaping the essence of the movement's ideology.⁶⁵ As a head of the Propagation section, Qutb wrote a series of pamphlets published in the name of the section, called *Hādhihi Da'watuka* "This is Your Message," but this was halted by the 1954 crisis.⁶⁶ In May 1954, after the *Ikhwān* had temporarily resolved its problems with the military junta in Egypt, the section published a weekly newspaper called *Majallat Ikhwān al-Muslimīn*, with Sayyid Qutb as its general editor.⁶⁷ Under his leadership, the section gradually changed its approach in dealing with various issues. As Mitchell says:

From 1951 there was a noticeable change in tone and emphasis. Still fundamental, of course, to all subjects discussed was the question of Islam, its nature, meaning, and destiny, but the method of exposition was much more specific. Members were no longer satisfied with the generalized formulas which hitherto had constituted the core of the doctrine preached by al-Bannā. This meant a more consciously 'scientific' approach to the problem of Islam. The section for the propagation of the message began to make use of the talent available to it among its professional members in the field of law, economics, society, education, chemistry, engineering and zoology..... Substance, not

⁶⁴Mitchell, Richard P., *The Society of the Muslim Brothers*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 1993, p.187.

⁶⁵*Ibid*, p.171, 187-188.

⁶⁶*Ibid*, p.188

⁶⁷Husaini, Ishak Musa, *The Moslem Brethern*, Khayat's College Book Cooperative, Beirut, 1956, p.145.

slogans, became a priority.⁶⁸

The so-called 'secular' methods of learning had also been introduced into missionary training as a supplement to a purely theological operation which already existed.⁶⁹

Later, a dispute occurred between the RCC and the *Ikhwān* in general and Qutb in particular regarding the establishment of an Islamic government, which saw the *Ikhwān* accusing the RCC as not seriously intending to implement the change.⁷⁰ In the case of Qutb, he turned down a position as a Minister of Education after discovering that he would not be given full freedom to implement an Islamic curriculum.⁷¹

His involvement in Islamic activities under the banner of the *Ikhwān* took place not only in Egypt but also in the other Arab countries. He represented the *Ikhwān* at the Islamic Conference in Damascus where he delivered a lecture entitled *al-Tarbiyat al-Khuluqiyya ka-Wasīla li-Taḥqīq al-Takāful al-Ijtimā'ī* "Ethical Education as a means to fulfilling mutual responsibility".⁷² On the same topic he delivered another lecture which was later published by the Mosque Committee of the Syrian University entitled *Nizām al-Takāful al-Ijtimā'ī fī al-Islām* "System of mutual responsibility in

⁶⁸*Ibid*, p.189.

⁶⁹*Ibid*, p.190.

⁷⁰Mitchell, Richard P., *The Society*, p.107.

⁷¹Fayyad, Samira, "Sayyid Qutb: His Thought and Literature", unpublished Ph.D thesis, Faculty of Arts University of Manchester, 1977, p.74.

⁷²Musallam, *Formative Stages*, p.267. See also Qutb, *Dirāsāt Islāmiyya*, p.48.

Islam".⁷³

Qutb's continued opposition to the secular policies of the government led to his conviction in July 1955. He was sentenced to 15 years of imprisonment and hard labour.⁷⁴ His imprisonment did not deter him from contributing to the cause of Islam especially in the field of writing. After experiencing a serious health problem, he was transferred to the prison hospital of Ṭurra where his relatives were allowed to visit him. The prison authority also provided facilities for him to pursue his writing career⁷⁵. With all these facilities and comfort that he enjoyed, he managed to complete the 30-part Qur'ānic commentary of *Fī Zilāl al-Qur'ān* in 1959 and the revision of its first 13 parts. In addition, he produced various written works on different Islamic subjects including *Hādhā al-Dīn* "This religion," *al-Mustaqbal li-Hādhā al-Dīn* "The Future of this Religion," *Khaṣā'iṣ al-Tasawwur al-Islāmī* "Characteristics of the Islamic Imagination," *al-Islām wa-Mushkilat al-Ḥadhāra* "Islam and Problem of Civilization" and his most controversial work *Ma'alim fī al-Ṭarīq* "Milestones on the Road."⁷⁶ It is believed that his idea in *Ma'alim fī al-Ṭarīq* led to his execution in 1966. The government alleged that inspired by this book, Sayyid Qutb and the secret apparatus of the *Ikhwān* conspired to overthrow the government.⁷⁷ On August 21,

⁷³*Ibid.*

⁷⁴Al-Khālīdī, *Sayyid Qutb*, p.361.

⁷⁵*Ibid.*

⁷⁶*Ibid.*, p.367.

⁷⁷Fayyad, Samira, *Sayyid Qutb*, p.81.

1966, Sayyid Qutb, his one-time prisonmate and successor to the leadership of the secret apparatus Muḥammad Yūsuf Hawwāsh and Qutb's first contact with the apparatus ʿAbd al-Fattāh Ismaʿīl, were sentenced to death by hanging. In spite of world-wide protests and pleas for mercy the sentences were carried out in the early morning hours of August 29, 1966.⁷⁸

⁷⁸*Ibid*, p.479.

CHAPTER TWO: BACKGROUND TO THE WRITING OF *FĪ ZILĀL AL-QUR'ĀN*

Qutb's interest in the Qur'ān

Most people recognise Qutb only as a prominent member of the *al-Ikhwān al-Muslimūn* even though in truth he spent only a small part of his life working for the *Ikhwān*. Al-Nadawī notes Qutb's account of having gone through 5 distinct stages in his life during their meeting in America:¹

- i) his early days in Mūshā.
- ii) his move to Cairo which diluted his early Islamic training in Mūshā.
- iii) the period when he forsook his religion to the extreme limit.
- iv) his interest in the Qur'ān as literature.
- v) the significant impact of the Qur'ān in his beliefs and lifes.

Yūsuf 'Azzām on the other hand, believes that Qutb underwent three different phases in his interest towards Islām as featured in his literature:-

- i) Qutb's interest in Islām from an artistic point of view
- ii) his interest in contemporary issues from an Islamic point of view.
- iii) his interest in issues relating to the Islamic movement.

¹See Al-Khālidī, *Sayyid Qutb*, p.545.

In fact, *Zilāl* was writing in the second of 'Azzām's divisions when he focused on promoting Islām as the effective solution to social problems. It is clear that Quṭb had undergone a difficult phase in his life which could have once destroyed his identity as a Muslim. However, a dramatic change took place at the later stage until he became a well-known figure in the Islamic movement. An interesting question is what really triggered him to change his orientation from the secular-literati to the study of the Qur'ān.

One of the factors which partially plays an important role in revitalising his interest to the Qur'ān was his early upbringing. As mentioned before, Quṭb came from a religious background which emphasized religious aspects, in particular, the teaching of Qur'ān. Although at this time, the Qur'ānic message did not affect him very much, the impact of the Qur'ān from his early age still can be seen on his adulthood. For example, an image of a man praying at the edge of a cliff and nearly falling down from it reminded him of the verse 2:11. Similarly, the image of a man breathing heavily with open mouth and tongue hanging out recalled for him the verse 7:175-176.²

Another incident which perhaps renewed his interest to the Qur'ān was a growing trend amongst the senior liberal literatis in 1930s who showed their interest on Islamic subjects, especially in Islamic history and biography. They were inspired

²Musallam, *Formative Stages*, p.133.

by resentment against western dominance in Egypt and the Arab world and liberal nationalists who attempted to emulate the European society and government. One also cannot rule out the emergence of the Islamic orientation groups such as Young Men's Muslim Association and *Ikhwān* who emphasized the social and political relevance of Islam to modern Egypt which more or less contributed to the change of the liberal literatis attitude.³ For example, the one time champion of secular liberal ideas Muḥammad Ḥusayn Haykal, initiated the trend by writing a book on the biography of the Prophet in 1935. After that, Qutb's mentor, al-ʿAqqad followed Haykal's footstep by writing a series of book on Islamic biographies, beginning with the Prophet Muhammad in 1942, followed by Caliph ʿUmar (1942), Caliph Abū Bakr (1943), the Prophet's wife ʿĀ'isha (1943), Caliph ʿAlī (1944) and ʿAlī's son al-Ḥusayn (1944). Thereafter Ṭāhā Ḥusayn who was a supporter of pharaonic nationalism, had also changed his orientation and began to write about Islam. His Islamic books includes *ʿAlā Hāmish al-Sīra* (1943), "The tree of misery" (1944), *al-Waʿd al-Haqq* (1950) and others.⁴ Qutb however, took a different approach by indulging in literary analysis of the Qur'ān.

It appears that Qutb's studied the Qur'ān not only for the academic reasons but also for fulfilling his psychological and spiritual needs. He admitted going through a critical stage in his life, in which he later found Qur'ān as a real answer. His empty

³Vatiokotis, P.J., *The History of Modern Egypt*, p.319,328-329.

⁴Busool, Assad N., *The Development of Ṭāhā Ḥusayn's Islamic Thought*, The Muslim World, vol.68, The Duncan Black MacDonald Centre, Connecticut,1978, p.270-284.

life was expounded mostly in his poetry which described him as the fugitive young man, a lover of the impossible who seeks what he cannot find and is bored with all he attains⁵. His mother's death in October 1940 was indeed a big loss for him and is regarded as a turning point in bringing his interest back to the study of Qur'ān at that period. There is no doubt that his mother has a big influence on his life. Upon her death he writes: "Mother...Who will narrate to me the tales of my childhood in which you portrayed me as if I were of a unique texture (*nasīj farīd*) which made me think that I was great and required to live up to this greatness"⁶ He said further: "Mother.....to whom do I ascend the step of life and who will celebrate when I am ascending.....Maybe many people will rejoice....but yours is a unique one as it is the rejoicing of the skillful cultivator who sees the fruits of his cultivation and efforts".⁷

Since Qutb was not married, his mother's death almost shattered his life as she was a source of inspiration and emotional support for him during her lifetime. In addition, he felt that the responsibility of raising his brother Muḥammad and his sisters Ḥamīda and Amīna which he previously shared with his mother after the death of his father became enormous. He writes again: "Only today have I felt the heavy burden....because as long as you lived I was strengthened by you. But now that you

⁵See al-Khālidi, *Sayyid Qutb*, p.148.

⁶*Ibid*, p.149.

⁷*Ibid*.

are gone I am alone and weak".⁸ The impact of her death was enormous to Qutb, his brother and sisters. In their joint dedication in *al-Atyāf al-Arba'a* "The Four Phantoms" they wrote: "After we lost our father and migrated from our home to Cairo we lived like strangers. But when you left us we became alienated in both the universe and life. We have become in this wide universe lost plants without roots and perplexed phantoms without a dwelling".⁹

Another factor which seemed to have compelled Qutb into devoting himself to the study of Qur'ān was his failed love affair between 1942 or 1943 which is evident from many of his proses and verses. After his mother's death, it appeared to him that marriage would ease his sorrow and meaningless life. He then fell in love and got engaged, but his desire for the relationship to bloom into marriage failed. Deeply shattered by the incident, he seems to have avoided any serious relationship with a woman until his death. Most people believe that Qutb's novel *Ashwāk* "Thorns" published in 1947 in Cairo, reveals this devastating affair.¹⁰ Qutb dedicated his work "to the one who plunged into the thorns with me, bled as I bled, grieved as I grieved, and went her own way as I went mine, both wounded after the battle...."¹¹ According to Musallam, the impact of this affair was clear in Qutb's prose in the early 1940's. In a poem entitled *Ḥilm al-Ḥayāt* "The Dream of Life," he mourned the end of his

⁸*Ibid.*

⁹*Ibid.*

¹⁰*Ibid*, p.150.

¹¹*Ibid.*

love affair. In another poem entitled *Nidā' al-Kharīf* "The Call of Autumn," Qutb described his love as a "forbidden fruit" which left him halted between heaven and earth. He also referred to his love as a myth which gave him nothing in his life but a rather painful outcome.¹² During the 40s, Qutb was still reflecting upon his sorrow and the shattered love in his poetry.¹³

Qutb's revitalised interest in the Qur'ān was also probably caused by a prolonged illness. Although there is no evidence that he suffered any health problems during his early youth, his writings from September 1940 imply that such a problem did indeed exist. As Musallam states:

In November 1945 Qutb reported that he was ill for four months. In July 1945 Qutb remarked sarcastically that he had consumed half of the medicine in the pharmacy in Hulwan. He was also reported to be hospitalized during his stay in America (1948-1950). In January 1952 he was reported to have serious eye problems. In the same month he was reported to be generally ill.¹⁴

Musallam believes that Qutb's health deteriorated after the death of his mother. The enormous responsibility of taking care of his brother and sisters as well as his career frustrations could well have contributed to the development of stomach, lung and heart ailments. His condition deteriorated in the 1950s and 1960s during his imprisonment and the growing political tensions between the *Ikhwān* and the Nasser regimes. In facing sickness and various problems alone, Qutb naturally turned to

¹²*Ibid* p.152.

¹³*Ibid*, p.153.

¹⁴*Ibid*.

religion for refuge and to the Qur'ān in particular.

Compilation of *Fī Zilāl Al-Qur'ān*

Fī Zilāl al-Qur'ān is one of Qutb's most popular books in which he discussed various Islamic subjects including *da'wa*, *jihād*, Islamic movements and Islamic reforms. *Zilāl* went through various stages before it was finally compiled as the book which exists today. Al-Khālīdī concludes that *Zilāl* underwent the following four important stages in its compilation:¹⁵

First stage: It was Qutb's ambition to present the Qur'an based on its principal and interpret the significance of its verses. He accomplished his goals when Sa'īd Ramaḍān al-Buṭī published a new magazine entitled *al-Muslimūn* and invited Qutb to write in a special column allocated to him. He took the opportunity to write a series of articles entitled *Fī Zilāl al-Qur'ān*. The first part of the article appeared in the third issue of the magazine in February 1952. He continued until the seventh part, ending in verse 103 of *Sūrat al-Baqara*.

Second stage: At this stage he was no longer interested in writing the later series of *Zilāl* in *al-Muslimūn* magazine, replacing it with *Nahwa Mujtama' Islāmī*. On

¹⁵Al-Khālīdī, *Sayyid Qutb*, p.544.

the other hand, *Zilāl* was published as a new exegesis book. He produced a commentary on a new part of the Qur'ān every two months where the first part was published by *Dār Ihyā' al-Kutub al-ʿArabiyya* in October 1952. From October 1952 until June 1954 he managed to complete only sixteen parts of the *Zilāl*.

Third stage: After the crackdown on the *Ikhwān*, most of its leaders including Qutb were sentenced to prison in 1954. At the beginning of his fifteen-year imprisonment, he did not manage to write even a part of the Qur'ān due to the continuous persecution and torture he suffered. The situation changed when he was admitted to the Turra prison hospital because of his illness. At the same time, his publisher successfully challenged the government over Qutb's imprisonment and ban from writing *Zilāl* which had resulted in their loss of income. Thus, in 1959 he managed to complete and publish the second edition of *Zilāl* which consists of some ecstatic and almost visionary ideas about mankind and about the Qur'ān in general. *Shaykh* Muḥammad al-Ghazālī was appointed by the government in censorship committee to examine and evaluate the book before its publication. As a result, his interpretation of *Sūrat al-Burūj* was entirely censored.¹⁶

Fourth stage: The first edition of the *Zilāl* appeared to concentrate on the discussion of artistic beauty of the Qur'ān rather than its principles and important messages. Later, he began to think of the significance of the Qur'ānic message in the

¹⁶The original exegesis was later published in the book of *Maʿalim fī al-Ṭarīq* under the title of *Hadhā huwa al-Ṭarīq*.

light of trials and tribulation suffered by him and other leaders of the *Ikhwān* at the hands of Nasser's regime. Quṭb examined all these events from the perspective of the Islamic movement to include *daʿwa*, *jihād*, education (*tarbiyya*) and the reform movement. He started with the three final parts of the first edition of the book based on this new approach. Upon the completion of the first edition, Quṭb began a major revision of the earlier editions with which he completed the first ten parts of the book. Most of the sections of his revised exegesis highlighted the significant of *ʿaqīda*, *daʿwa*, *jihād*, *sharīʿa* and *jāhiliyya*. It was described that parts seven and eight which analyse *Sūrat al-Anʿam* demonstrated Quṭb's maturity and command of his new approach. When he was freed from prison because of his illness in 1964, he only managed to publish chapters eleven to thirteen of the book ending in *Sūrat Ibrāhīm* before he was arrested again and executed in 1966.

General features of *Zilāl*.

A number of distinct characteristics in Quṭb's approach differ *Zilāl* from other books of exegeses. They are described as follows:

- i) giving ideas on the central themes

In the *Zilāl* Quṭb begin by introducing the central theme of every *sūra* in order to give readers a general understanding and introduce the prime issue related to each

sūra. He also introduces in the introduction several sub-themes closely-related to the central themes. Notwithstanding the new approach of revealing the central theme of a *sūra*, Qutb however, maintains a conventional verse by verse style of interpretation as the main feature of *Zilāl*. For instance in the *Sūrat al-Anfāl*, Qutb described that *jihād* as the main theme of the *sūra*. This includes the meaning, objectives and misconception of *jihād*, the position of non-believers in Islām and include an example from the battle of Badr.¹⁷

ii) dividing *sūra* into several sections

Another distinctive feature of *Zilāl* is the division of each *sūra* into several sections. For example, Qutb divided *sūrat al-Anfāl* four sections which include verses 1-29, 30-40, 41-54 and 55-75. Every section begins a summary of the entire section followed by a verse by verse interpretation of the section. For example in the second section of *Sūrat al-Anfāl* from verse 30-40, the main introductory section discusses the position of polytheists, their hatred towards the Prophet and their attempt to prevent the proliferation of Islām. In response, God commanded the Muslims to fight against them until they were completely overpowered.¹⁸

iii) refrain from discussing at length disputed verses.

¹⁷Qutb, *Zilāl*, vol.5, p.1431-1469. Busool, Assad N., *The Development of Tāhā Husayn's Islamic Thought*, The Muslim World, vol.68, The Duncan Black MacDonald Centre, Connecticut, 1978

¹⁸Qutb, *Zilāl*, vol.5, p.1500.

Qutb appeared on many occasions to avoid discussing at length disputed verses . He would discuss the disputed verse and various questions which had been raised about it before he put forward his own view and arguments. This was probably done by Qutb in order to shorten the discussion and to focus on more important matters.¹⁹ For example in the case of *Isrā' wa-al-Mi'raj* (Night journey and ascension to heaven), there are many opinions on this matter as to whether the journey took place while the Prophet was awake or asleep, and the question of whether the Prophet travelled with his physical being and his soul or in some other way. A tradition says that it was simply a dream. Other sources maintained that the Prophet's ascension was both physical and spiritual. A more reliable source relates that on the night the Prophet went to *al-Harām* mosque from the house of Umm Hānī', where he ascended for the night journey during his nap. Qutb holds that the nature of the miraculous event of the Prophet should not become a source of controversy. To him, those who are conscious of the might of God and the nature of prophethood would not be surprised at such an event. As exemplified by Abū Bakr, a close Companion of the Prophet who was ready to believe more than what happened when the news of the Prophet's ascension was brought to him.²⁰

Qutb also held similar attitudes with regards to the juristical dispute about verses amongst the Muslim scholars. For example, verse 183 of *Sūrat al-Baqara*

¹⁹To him, the most important subject and phenomenon to be discussed is how to bring people back to the religion of God in a real sense and to praise Allah with His *Ulūhiyya* and *Hākimiyya*. This is the reality which Islam and Muslims have to encounter. See Qutb, *Zilāl*, vol.3, p.1518-1519.

²⁰*Ibid*, vol.4, p.2210-2211.

discusses the exemption of travellers from the obligation of fasting in the month of Ramaḍān. However, Qutb holds, it should not be judged by the seriousness of the illness or difficulties of a journey which excuse them from fasting. To him, as long as we do not know the reason (*‘illa*) behind this exception, the unqualified (*mutlaq*) rule contains in the verse should prevail and only Allah knows the reason. Therefore, we should obey the rule despite the fact that the wisdom (*hikma*) of this verse is concealed.²¹

With regard to verses pertaining to the attributes of God, such as the hand and the face of God, Qutb does not put much emphasis on the literal aspect, normally debated by the early exegetes who discussed the various views of different schools of thought. This can be seen in the exegesis of the verse "All that is on earth will perish but will abide (forever) the 'Face' of your Lord, full of Majesty, Bounty and Honour" on which Qutb's says, "all beings are dying and the destruction covers everything in life which overflows the skies and earth. Only the Face of the Lord remains which protects all lives through the times and overflows all beings with Majesty".²²

He also did not want to be caught up by particular words in the Qur'ān which he regards as being beyond human knowledge and ability to interpret. For example the word *al-Ayyām* (days) in the description of Qur'ān. Qutb left the issue by stating that it is only known by God. He was convinced that the "days" mentioned are completely

²¹*Ibid*, vol.1, p.168-169.

²²*Ibid*, vol.6, p.3454.

different from the ordinary days which are determined by the rotation of the earth around the sun. The phrase 'six days' which relates to the creation of the heavens and earth as mentioned in several places in the Qur'ān, and the word *al-ʿArsh* (The Throne), are matters the Muslims are obliged to believe in without interpretation as they can not know their reality. They are thus unlike *al-Istiwā'* which literally means "settling", which can be perceived as a symbol of God's ascendancy over His creation.²³

iv) Literary Arabic Style of Exegesis

Zilāl is regarded as a literary style of exegesis which marked Qutb's orientation and specialization as a writer. This style of exegesis was adopted as a result of Qutb's overwhelming feeling about the artistic beauty of the Qur'ān. Therefore, *Zilāl* was presented partly in the literary style which concentrates on the artistic concept of Qur'ān. This subject will be discussed in detail later.

v) Modern Approach

Qutb's approach to exegesis differs in many aspects from others. The designation of general themes and division of *sūra* which are absent from most of other exegeses. His knowledge of modern thought and academic standard

²³*Ibid*, vol.5, p.2808.

demonstrated in *Zilāl* might also be alien to other exegeses. For example, Qutb quoted from different books of *tafsīr*, *ahādīth* and the view of Muslim jurists with the aim either to support or to refute them. In addition, Qutb preferred to discuss contemporary events or issues and ignore irrelevant issue when discussing a particular verse. For example, the United States became his primary focus when discussing verses regarding the behaviour of people.²⁴ He also avoided a thorough discussion of issues related to *al-ghanīma* (the spoil of war) which is, to him, irrelevant in the light of more important matters in hand.²⁵ As he says:

Based on the authentic reports (*riwāyāt*) and views of the Muslim jurists the question of *al-ghanīma* poses significant length of dispute.....And we - in the method adopted in *Zilāl* - will not discuss various branches of juristics (*al-tafrī'āt al-fiqhiyya*) which require special discussion of it..... In specific, the subject of *al-ghanīma* is not Islamically applicable in this day. Today we do not have the Islamic state and the leader of the *umma* and the Muslim *umma* who strive in the way of Allah which must divide the spoils of war.....The time has come similar to the situation when this religion came to the people for the first time, and people turn back to *al-jāhiliyya* as they had before, they associated Allah with other gods and govern their life with their man-made laws! This religion has again to call people to enter into its realm.....to witness that there is no god except Allah and Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah....to attribute Allah to His deity, sovereignty and authority..... This is the real challenge which is encountered by this religion nowadays;²⁶

Qutb's approaches in the *Zilāl*

Qutb's approach to *tafsīr* is different from other traditional or modern exegetes.

²⁴His mentions of the United States in *Zilāl* can be referred to in vol.1, p.422, vol.2, p.629, vol.2, p.630-637, vol.2, p.663, vol. 2, p.1191 and in several other verses.

²⁵*Ibid*, vol.3, p.1518.

²⁶*Ibid*, vol.3, p.1518-1519.

He formulated a new approach which he believed could restore the beauty and the message of the Qur'ān as it was in the time of the Prophet Muḥammad. Quṭb compiled his method of interpretation of the Qur'ān in his *al-Taṣwīr al-Fannī fī al-Qur'ān* which was regarded as the first Islamic book written by Quṭb. The book, which was published by *Dār al-Ma'ārif*, Egypt, in April 1945, was originally a compilation of two articles published in *Muqtataf* magazine in 1939 under the same title.²⁷ *Taṣwīr* is considered to be a foundation of Quṭb's Qur'ānic commentary which includes *Fī Zilāl al-Qur'ān* and *Mashāhid al-Qiyāma*.

Quṭb acknowledges that his initial interest in Qur'ānic studies was purely for artistic purposes. He also makes it clear that, if the excellence of art and the sanctity of religion ever coincided that would be unintentional and would not influence his belief. Quṭb introduces the book with a brief discussion about the effect of the Qur'ān and the trends of Qur'ānic commentary throughout history. He believes that at the beginning of the Qur'ānic revelation, the Arabs who converted to Islām were very much affected by the charm of the Qur'ān. This originates from the beautiful expressive and picturesque nature of Qur'ānic expressions. The conversion of 'Umar ibn al-Khaṭṭab was a classic example of a person greatly influenced by this feature of the Qur'ān. Despite the polytheists' accusation that the Qur'ān was merely a collection of poems, they acknowledged its eloquence and inimitability (*ījāz*).²⁸ At the end of

²⁷Al-Khalidī, *Sayyid Quṭb*, p.527.

²⁸Quṭb, *Taṣwīr*, p.19, 21-22.

the second century A.H., Qur'ānic study became an important subject among Muslim scholars specialising in various fields. Qur'ānic study however was restricted to the specific aspects of knowledge which looked at each verse of the Qur'ān as independent. Thus, the concern of the Qur'ānic commentaries varies between the juristic, dialectical, grammatical, syntactical, historical and mythical. However, according to Qutb, the aspect of its artistic beauty and its harmony with the religious message was neglected.²⁹

Realizing this vacuum, Qutb took the initiative to restore the study of the Qur'ān as it was in the time of the Prophet. After studying the Qur'ān for several years he concluded that artistic portrayal (*al-taṣwīr al-fannī*) is the method predominantly being employed by the Qur'ān to deliver its message. According to al-Khālīdī, Qutb's success in discovering the general trend of Qur'ānic expression is a result of his view of the Qur'ān as a unified, well-organized and integrated subject (*ka-waḥda mawḍū'īyya mutanāsiqa mutakāmila*). Qutb also managed to identify the general connection (*al-rābi' al-ʿām*) and a strong link which binds all the Qur'ānic verses with its subjects and its artistic inimitability.³⁰

As an important principle in Qur'ānic commentary, Qutb defines *taṣwīr* as follows:

²⁹*Ibid*, p.24-26.

³⁰Al-Khālīdī, Ṣalāḥ ʿAbd al-Fatāḥ, *Nazariyyat al-Taṣwīr al-Fannī ʿind Sayyid Qutb*, Dār al-Furqān, ʿAmman, 1983, p.14.

Taṣwīr is a pre-eminent tools in the Qur'ānic method. Its designates with sensual dramatization the image of mental meaning (*al-ma'na al-dhihnī*), psychological condition (*al-hāla al-naḥsiyya*), perceptible events (*al-ḥadīth al-maḥsūs*), watchful scene (*al-mashad al-manẓūr*), human exemplar (*al-namūdḥaj al-insānī*) and human character (*al-tabī'a al-basharīya*). These transforms into an image similar to individual life (*al-ḥayāt al-shākhiṣa*), a fresh movement (*al-ḥaraka al-mutajaddida*). Therefore the mental meaning transforms into a form of action or movement (*hai'a au ḥaraka*), psychological condition (*al-hāla al-naḥsiyya*) becomes visible or perceptible (*lauḥa au mashad*), the human exemplar (*al-namūdḥaj al-insānī*) becomes a lively person (*shākhiṣun ḥayyun*) and the human nature (*al-tabī'a al-bashariyya*) becomes embodied or visible (*mujassama marī'a*).³¹

Sayyid Quṭb explains further that

Taṣwīr in the Qur'ān is not a stylistic embellishment: it is an established method, a comprehensive characteristic,... using variations in colour, movement, tone, and sound, and employing harmonious patterns and artistic sequences to offer an effective image to the ears, the sense, as well as the imagination, the heart and mind.³²

To clearly describe the complex principle of *taṣwīr*, he puts forward an example from

Sūra 7 verse 40:

Lo! they who deny Our revelations and scorn them, for them the gates of Heaven will not be opened nor will they enter the Garden until the camel goeth through the needle's eye. Thus do We requite the guilty.

To him, the verse captures the reader's imagination on the impossibility of the

³¹Quṭb, *Taṣwīr*, p.36. I.J.Boullata simplified this definition as follows "The Quranic style imparts vividness, immediacy, and dynamism to its images so that abstract ideas take on shape or movement; psychological states become perceptible tableaux or spectacles; events and scenes and stories turn into actual and dramatic appearances; human types are fleshed out as present and living beings; and human nature becomes embodied and visible". See al-Khālīdī, *Nazariyya*, p.129.

³²*Ibid*, p.37.

disbelievers entering the Heaven which is portrayed and likened to the impossibility of a camel entering a needle's eye. The verse creates an abstract meaning in the mind of the reader using the sensuous image (*ṣūra ḥissiyya*) through which the comparison can be easily understood.³³ Then he quotes *sūrat* 14 verses 42-43 as an example of psychological and mental states (*al-ḥālat al-naḥsiyya wa-al-ma'ḥawwiyya*) which says:

Deem not that Allah is unaware of what the wicked do. He but giveth them a respite till a day when eyes will stare (in terror). As they come hurrying on in fear, their heads upraised, their gaze returning not to them, and their hearts as air.

Qutb comments that there are vivid images in these verses, images of consternation and disgrace of dread and submission, as in the phrase: "they come hurrying on in fear, their heads upraised, their gaze returning not to them, and their hearts as air." The Qur'ān describes these four successive images so that the misery experienced on that day can be clearly imagined.³⁴

Qutb believed that there were two methods forming the basis of Quranic portrayal including sensual dramatization (*al-takhyīl al-ḥissi*) and personafication (*tajsiīm*).³⁵ Using the technique of sensual dramatization, the Qur'ān imparts to solid subjects and natural phenomena a life akin to that of humans.³⁶ An example is Q.

³³ *Ibid*, p.36.

³⁴ See Rafi'ī, p.81.

³⁵ Qutb, *Taṣwīr*, p.72.

³⁶ *Ibid*.

18:81 which reads "And the morning when it breathes". Here breathing, a human quality, is attributed to the morning.³⁷ Personification in Qutb's accounts is a tool for portraying images and forms. The Qur'ān applies this method to transform abstract concepts into something real to enable the reader to understand easily the nature of this concept. For example, in Q.2:197, *taqwā* is personified as provisions (*zād*),³⁸ while sin in Q.6:31 personified as burdens (*aḥmal*) that are carried on one's back, so that the reader feels the benefit of *taqwa* and the horror of sin.³⁹ Personification and sensual dramatization are also used in clarifying the abstract meaning contained in the anthropomorphic expressions in the Qur'ān such as "The Hand of Allah is above their hand", "His Throne was on the water" and "He sat on the Throne".⁴⁰

Qutb also found that the verses of Qur'ān were also effectively portrayed through the artistic harmony (*al-tanāsuq al-fannī*). Even though the Qur'ān only employs words to portray the picture, the portrayal is sometimes assisted by the music and rhythm which have an impact on various elements and compositions of the picture. It has to be stressed that the harmony of the verses or *sūra* also contribute to conveying the general tone of the *sūras*. This technique is deliberately used to create a lively scene and atmosphere in each message the Qur'ān delivers. For example,

³⁷*Ibid*, p.73.

³⁸*Ibid*, p.80.

³⁹*Ibid*.

⁴⁰*Ibid*, p.85.

chapter 19 of the Qur'ān which relates the story of Zakariyā and Yaḥyā followed by that of Maryam and ʿĪsā shows the effectiveness of the style of presentation. The whole *sūra* demonstrates that the Qur'ān uses one particular rhythm at the beginning of the *sūra*, followed by other rhymes as the verses become longer. All these rhythms, he maintains, are deliberately employed to indicate a change in the emotional atmosphere of the speech.⁴¹

Another example which is cited by Qutb was *Sūra* 113. This chapter, he explains, evokes the tone of *taʿwīdha* (a particular religious prayer uttered to beseech protection from evil), which is one of murmuring and obscurity. Having explained this, he goes on to interpret the chapter, after which he shows the harmony its picture generates. From the various meanings of the word *falaq*, he chooses "dawn" as it is the most representative of the darkness of the evil things mentioned thereafter, and because it has particular obscurity, the reason for which he later clarifies.

[Muḥammad] seeks protection in the Lord of dawn 'from the mischief of every created thing'. In order to convey the obscurity and spiritual darkness two generalizations are made, first in the use of the indefinite word *sharr*, and second in the use of the relative particle *ma*, which is general in sense. He also seeks protection "from the mischief of the darkness when it is intense" i.e. the night when its darkness is so penetrating that it becomes dreadful. "And from the mischief of those who spit on the knots": the atmosphere in which these wizards and soothsayers perform their action is full of secrecy and fright, and they mostly do it in darkness. "And from the mischief of the envier when he envieth": envy is a hidden emotion, obscure and dreadful, reposing in a dark corner of the psyche.

The atmosphere in this picture is full of secrecy, darkness and dread. [Muḥammad] seeks protection in God from this darkness. But God is the Lord

⁴¹*Ibid*, p.108-109.

of all creation, so why particularize here about dawn? This is done to generate harmony in the environment of the picture. The first impression that comes to mind is that it would have been better to seek protection in the Lord of light from the darkness. But in accordance with the sensitive faculty of portrayal, the light exposes the dread and the obscurity and hence its discord with the other elements in the picture. The dawn therefore is much more suited as it combines the overtones of both light and darkness in addition to its enchanting and mysterious moment.

If one looks at the elements of this picture one sees on the one hand, *al-falaq* and *al-ghāsiq*, representing two scenes in external nature, and on the other, two human creatures in *al-naḥḥāthāt* and *al-hāsīd*. While the first two contrast in time, the other two are contrasting types of human nature. All these elements are distributed harmoniously and evenly in the environment of the picture, and they take on a unified colouring of dread and obscurity.⁴²

Despite Qutb's initial intent to focus his Qur'ānic study only on its artistic aspects, his difficulties in avoiding especially indulging and emphasizing the religious aspects of the Qur'ān, when discussing the Qur'ānic tale become clear later on. Qutb's discussion of the purpose of tales in the Qur'ān clearly indicates this tendency and in fact, the emphasis is more on the religious rather than the artistic aspect. Qutb's lists of the purposes include: the confirmation of the truth of the Revelation and the Religion of Allah, reaffirmation that the true religion from Noah to Muḥammad was from Allah, attestation that Unitarianism (*tawḥīd*) is the basis of Islam, Judaism and Christianity, acknowledgement of the similarity between the religion of Muḥammad and Ibrāhīm, declaration of support and blessing from Allah to His prophets and their friends and notification of the deceit of Satan to the Children of Adam.⁴³

⁴²*Ibid*, p.115-116.

⁴³*Ibid*, p.144-154.

Fī Zilāl al-Qur'ān and Al-Taṣwīr al-Fannī

As mentioned before, *al-Taṣwīr al-Fannī* is the basis used by Qutb to interpret the Qur'ān. It is also the principle employed by Qutb to write books such as *Mashāhid al-Qiyāma* and *Fī Zilāl al-Qur'ān*. *Taṣwīr* is a book in which Qutb focuses on artistic presentation and discussion of the charm, the aesthetic value and inimitability of Qur'ān. In fact, it was the artistic value which had triggered Qutb in his early stage of studying the Qur'ān, as he acknowledges:

Indeed, it was my real intention to focus merely on the artistic aspect [of the Qur'ān] without discussing the language, theology or jurisprudence or any other discussion such as that, which has frequently been discussed on the subject of the Qur'ān.⁴⁴

This purpose had not changed when Qutb wrote *Mashāhid al-Qiyāma*, a study of verses of the Qur'ān related to the day of Judgement. He says:

My purpose here is purely artistic, I would not be influenced except by sense of being an independent artistic critic. If the excellence of art and the sanctity of religion happen to coincide, it would be purely unintentional and would not influence my belief.⁴⁵

In the first edition of *Zilāl*, Qutb still maintained this sole interest in studying the Qur'ān. He said: I try to express my preoccupation; which ranges from feelings about the amazing artistic beauty of this inimitable book and the feeling of its

⁴⁴*Ibid*, p.8. See also al-Khālīdī, *Nazariyya*, p.247.

⁴⁵Qutb, *Mashāhid*, p.10 . See also al-Khālīdī, *Nazariyya*, p.248.

harmonious expression and portrayal.⁴⁶ But in the second edition, the artistic beauty no longer remains as his sole purpose. Now, there are new themes added in his revision including the significance of soul, society and humanity. In addition, he illustrates the general concept of Islām contained in the Qur'ān and the wisdom of the creation of human beings. In other words, the second edition of *Zilāl* was an integral combination of an artistic and religious purposes.⁴⁷

In the third edition of *Zilāl*, Quṭb began to concentrate on the importance of "the active Qur'ān" (*al-Qur'ān al-ḥarakī*). In this review edition, Quṭb stresses the role of "the active Qur'ān" which was proven successful by the education of the Companions of the Prophet during the early mission of the Prophet. He also explains that the Qur'ān was the only source of guidance for this first Muslim generation in dealing with the polytheists around them. Quṭb also explained the role of "the active Qur'ān" in the present Islamic movement in educating its members and in dealing with the present society. However, this does not mean that the artistic purpose had been entirely neglected by Quṭb.⁴⁸

At this stage, Quṭb's approach can be understood by referring to his book, *Khaṣā'iṣ al-Taṣawwur al-Islāmī wa-Muqawwimatuhu* "The Islamic Imagination and

⁴⁶See al-Khālīdī, *Nazariyya*, p.248.

⁴⁷*Ibid*, p.249.

⁴⁸*Ibid*, p.249.

its Characteristics." Here, he argues that to acquire real knowledge of the Qur'ān one needs more than just a *tafsīr* in the conventional way:

The real problem in grasping the significance and the spirit of the Qur'ānic teaching does not lie in understanding its words and sentences, that is to say, its exegesis, as is often claimed. This does not constitute the problem at all. The problem lies in the capacity of our minds to reconstruct feelings, ideas and experiences like the feelings, ideas, and experiences of the first generation of Muslims when they received these revelations from the lips of the Prophet in the thick of the struggle.⁴⁹

In order to achieve this, Qutb's approach is to reform the people and their societies on the basis of faith, by inducing and appealing to people through some ecstatic presentation as in the *Taṣwīr*, and giving visionary ideas about mankind and about people. Baljon states that Qutb's approach in the *Zilāl* is an example of the modern trend in *tafsīr* where the Qur'ān is not studied for a "purely scholarly interest".⁵⁰ He avoids being engaged excessively in philological, philosophical or jurisprudential arguments. This trend was first propagated by Jamāl al-Dīn al-Afghanī, but, it was popularized by ʿAbduh.⁵¹ His message is that the study of the Qur'ān from a purely scholarly point of view cannot give real understanding of the meaning of the Qur'ān, rather it gives superficial knowledge only. This is also supported by his belief that the Qur'ān when addressing the human self does not restrict itself to any of its aspects whether be those the intellect, intuition, or the senses but rather to a person

⁴⁹Qutb, *Khaṣāʾiṣ*, trans. p.3.

⁵⁰Baljon, J.M.S., *Modern Muslim Koran Interpretation*, E.J.Brill, Leiden, 1961, p.126.

⁵¹Fayyad, *Sayyid Qutb*, p.84-85. See also Jansen, J.J.G., *The Interpretation of the Koran in Modern Egypt*, E.J.Brill, Leiden, 1980, p.18-25.

as a whole:

The Qur'ānic approach (*al-minhāj al-Qur'ānī*) never presents the ideology (*al-‘aqīda*) in the form of a theory to be studied, for this is the knowledge that establishes nothing in the conscience or in life. It is "cold" knowledge that reins not one's caprices nor frees him from the yoke of desires. Also, it does not present studies in jurisprudence, the political and economic systems, the natural and social sciences, nor in any other form of knowledge. rather it presents this religion as an ideology..... moving [its adherents] towards the realization of its practical contents from the moment it settles in the hearts and minds.⁵²

From the above quotation, it can be seen that Qutb's approach to the Qur'ān is to induce people not only to feel the message of the Qur'ān, but, more importantly, to steer them into action. This is in complete agreement with ‘Abduh's view.⁵³ In commenting on ‘Abduh's view, Jansen states:

the Koran is not primarily the source of Islamic law or dogmatics, or an occasion for philologists to display their ingenuity, but it is the book from which Moslems ought to derive their ideas about this world and the world to come.⁵⁴

However, Qutb criticizes ‘Abduh's approach which places the role of human reason as equal to revelation as a reaction to the intellectual stagnation of the Muslims at that time:

He [‘Abduh] argued that Islam gives human reason great value and a significant role in religion as well as in the practical affairs of life, However, caught between the two extremes of the intellectual inertia in the Muslim world and the deification of reason in Europe, he propounded the theory that human reason and divine revelation are of equal importance for the

⁵²Qutb, *Zilāl*, vol.3, p.1399.

⁵³Riḍa, Rashīd, *Tafsīr al-Manār*, p.17.

⁵⁴Jansen, *The Interpretation of the Koran in Modern Egypt*, p.24-25.

guidance of man, and that it is impossible that knowledge acquired through thought should come into conflict with divinely-revealed truths.⁵⁵

In order to avoid this or other approaches which in Qutb's view are alien to the method of Qur'ān, he suggests:

We cannot approach what the Qur'ān states with prejudiced minds and preconceived ideas whether generally or in relation to the subject matter of the statements under study. the opposite approach is the right way: we must approach the Qur'ānic pronouncements in order to derive our concepts and formulate our ideas from them⁵⁶

Qutb makes another important point; that to study and understand the Qur'ān means not merely knowing its words and phrases, but one should also lead a life similar to that of the early Muslims in the sense of striving to follow the message of the Qur'ān and to propagate it. In other words, he tries to justify his style by stating that one can only get the true meaning of the Qur'ān when one follows the footsteps of the Companions of the Prophet who were originally the object of the Qur'ānic revelation. He argues that they successfully grasped the truth of the message of the Qur'ān because it was addressing phenomena and conditions that were occurring in their lives. Unless, one follows this way, one will fail to appreciate and effectively convey the message presented in the Qur'ān because the messages are not an integral part of one's own feelings and experience. Thus, the *Zilāl* in this sense, can be described as a movement (*ḥarakī*) sort of *tafsīr*. By interpreting the Qur'ān as he has done, Qutb is trying to bring it closer to the movement, so that they will feel that the

⁵⁵Qutb, *Khaṣā'is*, trans., p.13.

⁵⁶Qutb, *Zilāl*, vol.30, p.3979, See Fayyad, p.90.

Qur'ān is really addressing them.

Of the modern commentators, Quṭb's approach is very similar to the Indian Abū al-Kalām Azad, the author of *The Tarjumān al-Qur'ān*. Like Quṭb, Azad emphasizes the need to free the Qur'ān from interpretation which is substantially influenced by foreign elements,

..when the influence of the Roman and Iranian civilizations began to sweep over the new Arab empire. Translations from Greek literature gave them new literary tastes and initiated them into the art dialectics. Zest for novelty and inventiveness in approach to everything came to be ever on the increase, with the result that the simplicity of the Qur'ānic manner gradually lost its charm for them.⁵⁷

Explaining Azad's approach to the Qur'ān, the translator of his commentary, Syed Abdul Latif, says:

The most characteristic feature of the Qur'ān, it may be stated, is its method of presentation. It is simple and direct. It does not employ artifice, nor display any conventional poses. Its appeal is to the lamental feeling and imagination of man, and to his daily experiences of life. It presents, so to say, a heart to heart talk between God and man. Such is the method adopted by the Qur'ān, a method common to all revealed scriptures.⁵⁸

⁵⁷Azad, Abul Kalam, *The Tarjumān al-Qur'ān*, trans. Dr. Syed Abdul Latif, vol.1, Asia Publishing House, London, 1965, p.xxxii.

⁵⁸*Ibid*, p. xiii.

CHAPTER THREE: MAIN THEMES OF *JIHĀD* IN *FĪ ZILĀL AL-QUR'ĀN*

A. The nature of *jihād*

Qutb defined *jihād* literally as meaning to sacrifice to the utmost and strive hard (*badhl al-juhd wa al-sa'y*). In another instance he referred to "*jihād* in the way of God" as meaning sacrifice and struggle (*badhl wa tadhiyya*).¹ In technical terms, *jihād* is sacrificing and struggling to establish an Islamic system. This constitutes various aspects of struggle, which includes striving to bring people's attitudes, way of life and thoughts into harmony with Islam. This also includes the struggle of people in the field of literature to promote good and prohibit evil. Furthermore, sacrifices in lifestyle, goods and suffering in the carrying out of this duty are part of *jihād*.² In another instance he said "*jihād* in the way of Allah includes *jihād* against an enemy, *jihād* against self, *jihād* against evil and corruption...all of which are alike..",³ without prioritizing any particular act or struggle. As long as the struggle leads to the achievement of an Islamic system, to him, they are equally important. Like prayer, fasting and *zakāt*, *jihād* is an obligation which has also been prescribed to previous nations. The root of *jihād* can be traced to the time of the Prophet Abraham.⁴

Qutb quoted al-Mawdūdī as saying that Islam deliberately uses the word *jihād*

¹Qutb, *Zilāl*, vol.1, p.265.

²*Ibid*, vol.3, p.1447.

³*Ibid*, vol.4, p.2446.

⁴*Ibid*.

to replace the word *al-ḥarb* or *al-qitāl*, or other words which convey a similar meaning of war. This is because al-Mawdūdī regarded *al-ḥarb* or *al-qitāl* as a war fought on the basis of individualism or tribalism which protected the interests of certain individuals or groups. More importantly, such war has no religious elements and connections.⁵ The West's territorial conquest of countries in Asia, Africa and other parts of the world is the best example of war motivated by economic and political interests,⁶ whereas *jihād* according to Quṭb is fought for the establishment of a just society and for the benefit of mankind in general. This can only be fulfilled through an Islamic system which will ensure that the interests of the above parties are protected.⁷

Quṭb criticized the notion that *jihād* is synonymous with "Holy War". He regarded this interpretation as confused and a misrepresentation because by this, *jihād* is associated with shedding blood, and barbaric and savage actions to the extent that when the word *jihād* is mentioned a picture of swords, bloodshed and killings will appear in people's minds. Thus, it completely overlooks the holy purpose of *jihād*.⁸ Quṭb also describes *jihād* as a mechanism that binds the Muslims to Allah. To Quṭb, the moment one embraces Islam, one automatically enters into an agreement with

⁵*Ibid*, vol.3, p.1447. This argument cannot be accepted because the word *al-qitāl* for example, is used in many occasions in the Qur'ān. In fact, one of the *sūrat* of the Qur'ān is called *Sūrat al-Qitāl*.

⁶*Ibid*, vol.3, p.1444.

⁷*Ibid*, vol.3, p.1447.

⁸*Ibid*, vol.3, p.5-7.

Allah to fully dedicate one's person and wealth entirely to Allah. Verse 111 of *Sūrat al-Tawba* portrays the Muslims who sacrifice their wealth and persons to Allah as a result of this understanding. The reward for those who fulfil this transaction is Paradise.⁹ Verse 10 of the *Sūrat al-Ṣaff* regards *jihād* as the most profitable business in people's life. This is because one cannot comprehend that with the limited assets that he spends and the short day of his business in this world, that he will acquire a Paradise with an eternal and everlasting benefit.¹⁰

According to Qutb, Islam highly regards the act of *jihād* such that the Qur'ān rules those who refuse to participate in *jihād* as hypocrites. By this, *jihād* becomes a yard stick to measure people's belief and sincerity towards Islam. In other words, those who believe in Allah and His Messenger will neither accept government by the secular system nor refrain from striving with their persons and their goods for the cause of establishing the Islamic system.¹¹

Jihād in the way of God is a duty described by Qutb as difficult and burdensome. However, this *jihād* has to be done, because it brings enormous benefits not only to the individual and the Muslim community but also to the people of other religions. Islam is reluctant to place a heavy burden on the people, seemingly without any consideration of their capabilities and innate characters. However, Islam believes

⁹*Ibid*, vol.3, p.1713-1714.

¹⁰*Ibid*, vol.6, p.3559.

¹¹*Ibid*, vol.3, p.1321.

that humanity is in serious difficulty, that this difficulty can only be solved by making *jihād* obligatory on everyone even though its wisdom and advantages are not readily apparent to many. Everyone who understand this wisdom and advantages of *jihād* realises its enormous impact. Although the burden of *jihād* is difficult, with the realisation of its wisdom, Qutb believes that the Muslims will accept the obligation of *jihād* with full responsibility. This realisation of its wisdom, in fact bring peace, comfort and happiness in carrying out this responsibility.¹²

This is what happened to the Muslims who fought in the Battle of Badr. Initially, they targeted the caravan and merchandise of the Quraysh's businessmen instead of the strong battalion of the Quraysh army. But by the will of Allah, the Quraysh caravan fled and the Quraysh armies came to fight against the Muslims until the Muslims succeeded. This victory was a turning point in the history of Islam, and from then onwards the Muslims began to be recognized and respected in the Arabian Peninsula, and then later in the rest of the world. This incident confirmed that *jihād*, which was incumbent upon the Muslims at that time, proved to be valuable not only to them but also to later generations, despite the difficulties and hardships the Muslims had suffered at that time.

The wisdom behind every obligation is not restricted only to the obligation of *jihād* but also to other affairs in people's lives such as in the story of the Prophet

¹²*Ibid*, vol.1, p.224.

Moses and his attendant when they lost their fish during a journey. Moses returned to the path they had come from in order to find the fish. Qutb sees this incident as the turning point to the Moses discovering of the servant whom he had initially intended to seek knowledge from. Despite the difficulties one has to endure, one has to believe that Allah will confer benefits of immeasurable proportions.¹³

History abounds with examples demonstrating how man has neglected the call of *jihād* because of all the difficulties he has to endure. Such examples include some among the companions of the Prophet who neglected this call, as documented in *Sūrat al-Ṣaff*, verse 2: "O you who believe! Why do you say that which you do not do?" In describing the reason behind the revelation of this verse Qutb¹⁴ quotes al-Ṭabarī who says in his exegesis,¹⁵

‘Alī ibn Ṭalḥa said that Ibn ‘Abbās said: Before *jihād* was ordained, a group of *Mu'minīn* said: "We would be very happy if Allah were to show us the action that He loves most and we will do that." Allah then told His Prophet that the most beloved action to Him is belief in Him without any doubt, and *jihād* against corrupted people who are against that belief and never acknowledge it. When *jihād* was made an obligation, they disliked it and found it difficult (*wa shaqqa ‘alaihim ‘amruhu*). Thus, Allah said: "O you who believe! Why do you say that which you do not do? Most hateful it is in the sight of Allah that you say that which you do not do."

[Qutb further says that] Ibn Kathīr in his exegesis said:¹⁶ According to the majority of Muslim jurists the verse was revealed when the enthusiastic

¹³*Ibid*, vol.1, p.224.

¹⁴*Ibid*, vol.6, p.3551-3552.

¹⁵Al-Ṭabarī, Abū Ja‘far Ibn Jarīr, *Tafsīr al-Ṭabarī*, vol.12, Dār al-Kutub al-‘Ilmiyya, Beirut, 1992, p.79.

¹⁶Ibn Kathīr, *Tafsīr al-Qur‘ān al-‘Azīm*, vol.4, Dār al-Kutub al-‘Ilmiyya, Beirut, 1986, p.559.

Muslims were waiting for the obligation of *jihād* to be prescribed for them. When the obligation was prescribed some of them withdrew. Allah says: Have you not seen those who were told to hold back their hands (from fighting) and offer prayers perfectly and give *zakāt*, but when fighting was ordained for them, behold! A section of them fears men as they fear Allah or even more. They say: "Our Lord! Why have you ordained fighting for us? Would that you had granted us respite for a short period?" Say: "Short is the enjoyment of this world. The Hereafter is (far) better for him who fears Allah, and you shall not be dealt with unjustly even equal to a *fatil* (the thin skin covering a date-stone). "Wheresoever you may be, death will overtake you even if you are in a fortress built up strong and high!"¹⁷

Despite all these difficulties, Quṭb believes that the obligation is within human capability. Quṭb insists that all obligations in worship and law including *jihād* are relevant and consistent with human nature and capabilities and he quotes the verse from Qur'ān: "He has not laid upon you in religion any hardship".¹⁸

Quṭb also reminds the Muslims that Allah does not need any benefit and it is not His intention to acquire anything from the fulfilment of *jihād*. He does not require any assistance to carry on *jihād* in order to defeat the corruption and evil committed by His vulnerable and powerless subjects. There should be strong reasons why Allah prescribed this obligation to human beings. If it is simply that He wants to uphold His religion by destroying His enemy, He is able to do so as He helped the previous Prophets by destroying their enemies with a flood, or a strong wind or a deadly scream. Thus, Quṭb believes that Allah has made *jihād* a prerogative for the Muslims in order to give them power to administer the world and the opportunity to receive a

¹⁷Qur'ān, 4:77-78.

¹⁸Qur'ān, 22:78.

good reward in the Hereafter.¹⁹ Qutb also believes that the following wisdoms are concealed in the duty of *jihād*:

i) as a form of test: By which, it can raise the good attributes concealed in people. These attributes will emerge from those who strive hard even though they may be killed or have to kill to uphold the truth that they strongly believe in.

ii) as a means to educate man: *Jihād* would destroy the evil desires associated with worldly pleasures and blameworthy attributes within oneself. It eliminates all the weakness and deficiencies until the sole desire is to follow the commandment of Allah.

iii) as a means for spiritual improvement: *Jihād* exposes to and constantly reminds a person of death. As a result, he is ever conscious of Allah and is in constant watch over his actions. It improves and cleanses his heart and uplifts his spirit.

iv) to improve the community through handing over the leadership of the world to the *mujāhidīn* who devote their life only for Allah.

v) to reward man with mercy and forgiveness.

Types of *Jihād*

***Jihād* against the self**

Al-Bājūrī,²⁰ one of the eminent Shāfi‘ī jurists, defines *jihād* as fighting in the

¹⁹*Ibid*, vol.5, p.2722.

²⁰Al-Bājūrī, Ibrāhīm, *Ḥāshiyat al-Bājūrī*, vol.2, Maktaba Dahlān, Indonesia, n.d., p.261

way of Allah to uphold His religion. This form of *jihād*, according to him, is "*al-jihād al-aṣghar*", whereas "*al-jihād al-akbar*" is *jihād* against the self, which the Prophet specifically referred to when returning from *jihād* (fighting) when he said, "We have just returned from '*al-jihād al-aṣghar*' to '*al-jihād al-akbar*'."²¹ This confirms that "the inner *jihād*" used by Maryam Jameelah plays an important role, especially for the early Muslims, who experienced "the inner struggle" during the Meccan period, before the outer struggle of the Medinan period.²² In this regard, Qutb takes a similar view as reflected in his statement that "*Jihād* in the way of Allah includes *jihād* against an enemy, self, evil and wickedness".²³ The significance of this type of *jihād* is also reflected in the Qur'ān where according to Qutb the word *jihād* in its two occurrences in the *Sūrat al-ʿAnkabūt* means *jihād* against the soul and to prevent tribulation (*fitna*).²⁴

The Qur'ān says:

Not equal are those of the believers who sit (at home) except those who are disabled (by injury or are blind or lame, etc.), and those who strive hard and fight in the cause of Allah with their wealth and who sit (at their homes). Allah has preferred in rank those who strive hard and fight with their wealth and their lives above those who sit (at home). Unto each, Allah has promised good (Paradise), but Allah has preferred those who strive hard and fight, above

²¹This is an athar which is the word of Ibrāhīm ibn ʿAblah. Al-Banna, Ḥasan, *Majmūʿat Rasā'il*, al-Mu'assasat al-Islāmiyya, 1984, p.436.

²²See Kolocotronis, Jamilah, *Islamic Jihad*, American Trust Publications, 1990, p.108.

²³Qutb, *Zilāl*, vol.4, p.2446.

²⁴Ibid, vol.5, p.2717. The two Qur'anic references are 29:6 and 64.

those who sit (at home) by a huge reward.²⁵

In interpreting this verse, Qutb reminds the Muslims of the negative elements originating from "the character of the human self" (*ṭabīʿat al-naḥs al-bashariyya*) and 'the character of the human community' (*ṭabīʿat al-jamaʿa al-bashariyya*). This character causes several negative attributes to appear in people including weakness, greed, stinginess, laziness, laxity and failing to respond to the call of *jihād* either with persons or property.²⁶

Qutb sometimes uses "*al-hawā*" to refer to the evil self which does not have a governor (*dābit*) or standard (*miqyās*). It is a wavering desire (*shahwat al-naḥs al-mutaqalliba*) which causes disturbances when it erupts. He also states that its wishes, desires, fears, ambitions and greed are detached from the truth and stray (*ḍalāl*) from the right path in contradiction to correct guidance (*hudā*).²⁷ Qutb believes that the self is the primary cause of all forms of tyranny and transgression. It is the root of all evil. Fear of Allah is the solid defence against the violent attack of desire. Indeed, there is hardly any other defence which can withstand such an attack. Allah does not ask man to suppress his desires, because He knows that it is not possible for man to do so. He simply asks man to control his desires and not to allow them to control him.

²⁵Qur'ān, 4:95.

²⁶Qutb, *Zilāl*, vol.2, p.741.

²⁷*Ibid.*

According to Qutb, one of the symptoms of the diseased one who is dominated by his own desires is to promise things he does not do. This attitude is clearly alien to the personality of the true believer whose self is consistent with his actions and words. This is probably one of the more relevant and pertinent examples regarding the diseases affecting the human soul which might eventually cause the individual to refuse to respond to the call of *jihād*. This was recorded in *Surāt al-Ṣaff* verse 2, which reads, "O you who believe! Why do you say that which you do not do?". As mentioned before, this verse was revealed about a group of Muslims who were enthusiastically asking Allah to prescribe *jihād* upon them. But when *jihād* was made obligatory, they turned their backs on it and refused to answer the call.²⁸

Another interesting point which Qutb raises is the relationship between *jihād* and death. In an interpretation of verse 78 of *Sūrat al-Nisā'*, "Wheresoever you may be, death will overtake you even if you are in a fortress built up strong and high," he criticized the attitude of some of the Muslims who refused to participate in *jihād* just because they feared that they would be killed. He insists that the decree of death is in the hands of Allah. Death is independent of war or peace or the strength or weakness of one's position, so it cannot be delayed by the delay of war. Based on this, refusal to fight out of fear of death is groundless.²⁹ In another verse Qutb points out that Allah explains that He is able to destroy and create anyone, rebuking the

²⁸*Ibid*, vol.6, p.3551-3552.

²⁹*Ibid*, vol.2, p.716.

perception of the unbelievers and hypocrites in this matter. Allah also calls upon the believers to beware of this concept, stating in the Qur'ān:

O you who believe! Be not like those who disbelieve(hypocrites) and who say to their brethren when they travel through the earth or go out to fight: "If they had stayed with us, they would not have died or been killed", so that Allah may make it a cause of regret in their hearts. It is Allah that gives life and causes death. And Allah is All-Seer of what you do.³⁰

Quṭb also discusses the fear of participating in *jihād* experienced by those who allow every aspect of their lives to be governed according to the desires and behaviour of other people. Quṭb argues that there are those who always judge and act solely according to what other people say, do and believe, evaluating the virtues of certain actions based on what the majority say. Islam does not tolerate this attitude if it is against its fundamental teaching, regardless of whether the action had been accepted in the past by the majority of people.³¹

To understand the problem and weakness of the self, we ought to understand the nature and the creation of the self. Quṭb suggests that the concept of soul (*al-qā'ida al-naḥsiyya*) can be understood from a combination of three important verses: "and We have shown him two highways",³² "We showed him the way: whether he be grateful or ungrateful (rests on his will)",³³ and finally the verse which states, "When

³⁰Qur'ān, 4:156.

³¹Quṭb, *Zilāl*, vol.6, p.3590.

³²Qur'ān, 90:10.

³³Qur'ān, 76:3.

I have fashioned him (in due proportion) and breathed into him of My spirit, fall ye down in obeisance unto him".³⁴ He also mentions that all the above verses have a strong connection with the verses mentioning the individual's responsibility: such as "Every soul will be (held) in pledge for its deed",³⁵ and also the verse which states that the fate of human beings will be determined by their deeds, "Verily, never will Allah change the condition of a people until they change it themselves".³⁶

All these verses disclose the constitution and position of the self in the human being. Firstly, the human being is made up of two elements: namely, clay, which is originally from the earth, and spirit, which is instilled by Allah. For Quṭb, this explains why human inclination is equally balanced between good and evil and is able to distinguish between the two. This enables the human being to guide himself to either good or evil. This capability is hidden in the subconscious of every human being as mentioned in the Qur'ān, and is sometimes activated through inspiration, "And it enlightened it as to its wrong and its right",³⁷ and sometimes through guidance, "And We have shown him the two highways".³⁸

Protecting ourselves from the beckoning of evil desire marks the beginning of

³⁴Qur'ān, 38:72.

³⁵Qur'ān, 74:38.

³⁶Qur'ān, 13:11.

³⁷Qur'ān, 91:8.

³⁸Qur'ān, 90:10.

the state of obedience to Allah.³⁹ Evil desire, which is sometimes referred to by Qutb as the "world's decorations (*zīnat al-ḥayāt al-dunyā*)"⁴⁰ and sometimes as, "pleasures of life (*matāʿ al-ḥayāt al-dunyā*)"⁴¹ leads one to ignore the obligation of *jihād*. This pleasure or decoration is described by the Qur'ān as including fathers, sons, brothers, mates, kindred, wealth, the commerce in which one fears a decline, and the dwelling in which one delights.⁴² However, Islam allows man to enjoy and gain the pleasure of life within their lawful boundaries. In fact, the desire for all the above pleasures is in the created nature of human beings.⁴³ It should also be noticed that the worldly pleasures are merely decorations in the sight of Allah. They differ from good deeds which are regarded as assets or values that should establish the foundation of human life.⁴⁴ Qutb reminds the Muslims that the Qur'ān refers to life as a pleasure and a temporary enjoyment,⁴⁵ and specifically refers to wealth and family as an amusement and distraction. Balancing this, the heart must also recognize the important purpose of the endowment of wealth and family which serve the appointment of people as a vicegerent of Allah in this world.⁴⁶ This understanding is illustrated in verse 207 of

³⁹Qutb, *Zilāl*, vol.6, p.3819.

⁴⁰*Ibid*, vol.4 , p.2272. This a Qur'ānic phrase, as in Q.18:46.

⁴¹*Ibid*, vol.3, p.1654. This is a Qur'ānic phrase, as in Q.9:38.

⁴²*Ibid*, vol.3, p.1615.

⁴³*Ibid*, vol.1, p.373-374.

⁴⁴*Ibid*, vol.4 , p.2272.

⁴⁵*Ibid*, vol.3, p.1539.

⁴⁶*Ibid*, vol.6, p.3580.

Sūrat al-Baqara which says "And of mankind is he who would sell himself, seeking the pleasure of Allah." According to Qutb, this verse illustrates the attitude of those who sacrifice their persons and wealth solely for Allah. He also quotes Ibn Kathīr⁴⁷ as saying that this verse was revealed regarding Ṣuhayb ibn Sinān al-Rūmī, who wanted to bring all his belongings during his emigration to Medina. However, he was forbidden to do so and was told to leave everything behind and he obeyed.⁴⁸

Jihād against Satan

Islam has declared an eternal war between the human being and Satan. Satan will never surrender since he has pledged to make human beings deviate from the right path, nor will human beings ever forget the mischief of Satan.⁴⁹ Those who follow Satan have chosen to deviate from the path of truth, which is ignorance (*jāhiliyya*) as opposed to Islam. There is no middle path as far as Islam is concerned.⁵⁰

Satan can take the form of human beings as well as jinn.⁵¹ He can manifest himself in the form of individuals or evil desire (*shahwa*), and he can be represented by the polytheists and other evil groups.⁵² His characteristics are that he is revolting,

⁴⁷Ibn Kathīr, *Tafsīr al-Qur'ān al-'Azīm*, vol.1, p.370.

⁴⁸*Ibid*, vol.1, p.206.

⁴⁹*Ibid*, vol.2, p.760-761.

⁵⁰*Ibid*, v.1, p.211.

⁵¹*Ibid*, vol.2, p.1188.

⁵²*Ibid*, vol.2, p.761.

rebellious, and dedicated to evil. These attributes can also apply either to humans or jinn. The nature and action of Satan in human form are well-known and can be seen in the world, whereas Satan in demonic form is known only through revelation.⁵³

According to Qutb, the danger of Satan is his capacity to portray himself as a leader of truth, and thus to decide the law, values, balance and norms in opposition to the law of Allah.⁵⁴ He is also able to make sinful actions appear appealing and lawful in the eyes of man, and thus seduce them to commit sins.⁵⁵ The decoration of sinful actions as appealing is the key to disobedience. People will feel pleased with themselves, believe that their action is always right and therefore never regret it. No one is able to remind and caution them, of whom Qutb says, "Decoration is a hidden deceit which covers the heart".⁵⁶ This is one of the tribulations which is inflicted by Satan on the human. In contrast, those who have been guided by Allah are always aware, sensitive and review their actions in order to avoid being deceived by Satan.⁵⁷ Therefore, Qutb believes that disobedience is a result of the influence of Satan.⁵⁸

It is the nature of human beings to love the property and pleasures of the

⁵³*Ibid*, vol.2, p.1188-1189.

⁵⁴*Ibid*, vol.2, p.1280.

⁵⁵*Ibid*, vol.3, p.2141.

⁵⁶*Ibid*, vol.5, p.2927.

⁵⁷*Ibid*.

⁵⁸*Ibid*, vol.3, p.2141.

world, leading them to fear poverty if they spend in the way of Allah. This negative human attribute is mentioned in many verses of the Qur'ān. This happens when Satan threatens people with poverty and encourages selfishness, greed and other negative traits. Fear of impoverishment was the reason, according to Qutb, that drove the people of *jāhiliyya* to commit such monstrous acts (*fahshā'*) as burying their daughters alive, unaware that they were prompted by Satan. Similarly, in order to avoid poverty people would not hesitate to indulge in activities such as usury to accumulate a fortune. Qutb holds the view that fear of the poverty which is the result of spending in the way of Allah belongs to the category of monstrous actions.⁵⁹

Jihād as a test

According to Qutb, faith is not merely in lipservice but in actions like *jihād*, which require patience and endurance. Those taking the responsibility of *da'wa* do not merit the title of true believers before being subjected to trials and tribulations. Just like gold is burned to differentiate it from dirt, trials and tribulations purify the heart of a true believer. Faith is a trust from Allah in this world which can only be borne by competent and qualified individuals. Viceregency bears the enormous trust of guiding people to the right path.⁶⁰

Tests and tribulations which include death, sufferings, loss of property and

⁵⁹*Ibid*, vol.1, p.312.

⁶⁰*Ibid*, vol.5, p.2720.

many other difficulties are in the nature (*sunna*) of *jihād* and *da'wa*. This is the real path to Paradise, which is surrounded with hardships and difficulties, whereas the path to hell is surrounded with pleasures and enjoyments. The form of these tests and tribulations differs from one period to another.⁶¹

In general, there are two types of trial, those which are filled with sufferings and difficulties and others filled with enjoyment and pleasure. Quṭb believed that people are generally able to withstand trial in the form of difficulties and tribulation. However, not many manage to resist worldly pleasures and enjoyments, and eventually neglect the duty of *jihād*. This kind of trial weakens people's willpower and strength of their effort to overcome desire. On the other hand, difficulties produce substantial endurance within oneself and increase the strength of organisation in countering these difficulties.⁶² To understand this subject clearly, Quṭb listed in detail the various kinds of tribulation which he and other Muslims experience in the present day:-⁶³

i) tribulations from the persecution of the Muslims. People in this situation do not have assistance and are powerless to defend themselves against this persecution. This is what people normally understand when discussing tribulation.

ii) tribulation from relatives and the beloved ones which the Muslims fear since they are helpless if these loved one are persecuted. The *mu'min* is called upon to

⁶¹*Ibid*, vol.1, p.539-540.

⁶²*Ibid*, vol.5, p.2337 and 2738.

⁶³*Ibid*, vol.5, p.2720.

reconcile or surrender in the name of love and kindred, and to fear Allah because he allegedly exposes his family to persecution.

iii)tribulations from the acceptance and praise of the world for transgressors, regarded by the public as successful people. Such tyrannies are neither identified nor opposed by anyone, except a small number of people who do not have any status or position in life.

iv)tribulation for the *mu'min* feeling isolated in matters concerning *‘aqīda* when he sees others around him being led astray, causing him to feel lonely and deserted.

v) tribulation which the *mu'min* comes across in a nation plunged into the despicable activities on which life in the society is built. Society may be caring and supportive and the country powerful and rich. Despite this, they are against Allah.

vi) the biggest tribulation of all is the tribulation of the self and desire (*al-nafs wa-al-shahwa*), the attractions of the world and fondness of pleasure and power. This is a more severe trial if someone remains continuously in this situation and help from Allah is delayed. Trial is difficult and can only be sustained by those protected by Allah who possess a strong conviction to defend their religion. All the above tribulations call for special preparations by the believers in their attempt to carry this responsibility.

Qutb insists that everything happening in life is under the supervision of Allah and contains wisdom to be pondered, for example ,the question of why Allah made

for every Prophet an enemy- the devils among mankind and jinn?⁶⁴ This does not happen unintentionally and every trial surely contains a lesson to be derived from it. It should also be borne in mind that all the trials and tribulation made by man and jinn are only with the permission of Allah. They do not have power except what has been given by Allah.⁶⁵ Therefore, it is important to understand the purpose of tests in every aspect of Muslim life. It can be a form of training which at times might be terrifying. Trial is also one of the most effective ways to differentiate between the *mujāhidīn* and *munāfiqīn*, who could either weaken or strengthen the Islamic ranks. It also reveals a person's hidden attributes which might sometimes be unknown even to the person himself.⁶⁶ Finally, we can conclude with several reasons for trial, listed by Qutb:-⁶⁷

- i) trial for patience.
- ii) trial in order that the Muslims show gratitude to Allah.
- iii) trial to confer good rewards.
- iv) trial to guide.
- v) trial to educate.
- vi) trial to purify.
- vi) trial to reform and revive.

Based on Qutb's experiences and observations, he indicates that many Muslims

⁶⁴Qur'ān, 6:112

⁶⁵*Ibid*, vol.3, p.1185.

⁶⁶*Ibid*, vol.1, p.539-540.

⁶⁷*Ibid*, vol.4, p.2466.

believe that they are able to withstand any tribulation either in the form of difficulties, or enjoyment and pleasure. However, many become disobedient when they are hit by tribulations or when *jihād* is prescribed upon them. There are several examples described in the Qur'ān of such attitudes relating to tribulation in earlier generations, one of which is mentioned in *Sūrat al-Baqara* verse 246, which states:-

Hast thou not turned thy vision to the chiefs of the Children of Israel after (the time of) Moses? They said to a Prophet (that was) among them: "Appoint for us a King that he may fight in the way of Allah: He said: Is it not possible, If ye were commanded to fight, that ye will not fight? They said: "How could we refuse to fight in the way of Allah, seeing that we were turned out of our homes and our families? But when they were commanded to fight, they turned back, except a small band among them. But Allah has full knowledge of those who do wrong.

The first trial the Children of Israel were subjected to was when the duty of *jihād* was prescribed upon them against the tyrant Goliath (*Jalūt*), but many refused to answer the call of *jihād*. Among those who complied, some failed in the second test to which they were subjected by their leader as documented in the Qur'ān:

He said: "Allah will test you at the stream; if any drink of its water, He goes not with my army. Only those who taste not of it go with me; A mere sip out of the hand is excused". But they all drank of it, except a few.⁶⁸

Even this small group did not remain firm until the end. Upon reaching the battlefield, they were frightened and horrified at the sight of the enemy. Some of them fled, as the Qur'ān says,

When they crossed the river, he and faithful ones with him, they said: "This day we cannot cope with Goliath and his forces". Only a small band sacrificed themselves and stood firm against the enemy because they had total confidence

⁶⁸Qur'ān, 2:250.

in Allah. They said "How oft, by Allah's Will, has a small force vanquished a big one?" Allah is with those who steadfastly persevere.⁶⁹

To Qutb, it is clear that this is one of the best examples of trial playing an important role in a terrifying situation. Trial is a useful means of differentiating those who have genuine faith from those who do not. This event also reveals how people's hearts and convictions may change dramatically when they face a real test on the battlefield. Those who initially expressed enthusiasm and willingness to sacrifice in the way of Allah turned away even before the battle had begun, and some withdrew, unable to cope with the severe test which took the form of a huge number of enemy forces. In contrast, those who stood firm were confident of the assistance of Allah.⁷⁰

⁶⁹*Ibid.*

⁷⁰*Ibid*, vol.1, p.262-263.

B. *Jihād* in the way of Allah

For *jihād* to be truly Islamic, it must be based on the profession of the existence of one God as its foundation, like all other beliefs and practices in Islam. Therefore, the first statement of *jihād* should be that it must take place in the way of Allah. In other words it is one of the deciding factors in whether an action is accepted or rewarded by Allah. This is clearly stated in the *hadīth* of the Prophet, "Actions are by intention and every man shall have that which he intended." According to Ibn Rajab,¹ one of the conditions is that every action of the Muslim must be for the sake of Allah if such action is to constitute *‘ibāda*. In other words, intention, in all action, is one of the criteria which decide whether a particular action is accepted or rejected by Allah. Intention here is not what the Muslim scholars (*fuqahā’*) define as a means of dividing one act of worship from another or dividing between worship and ritual. It is the intention which differentiates between the aim (*maqsūd*)² of an action done solely for Allah, and others which are discussed by the Muslim scholars under the chapter of sincerity and intention.³ Therefore, we can see that Quṭb in almost all the verses regarding *jihād* and fighting (*qitāl*) in the *Zilāl*, insists on the need for it being carried out solely to attain the pleasure of Allah. For example in interpreting one verse

¹Ibn Rajab, Zayn al-Dīn Abū al-Faraj ‘Abd al-Raḥmān ibn Shihāb al-Dīn ibn Aḥmad, *Jāmi‘ al-‘Ulūm wa-al-Ḥikam*, Dār al-Ma‘rifa, Beirut, n.d., p.8.

²Other words which carry similar connotation used by Qur’ān including "*al-irāda*" and "*al-ibtighā’*." *Ibid.*

³*Ibid.*

of the Qur'ān "Let those fight in the way of Allah.....",⁴ Qutb says:

Islam does not recognize fighting except in that way [i.e. in the way of Allah]. It does not recognize fighting for *ghanīma* and it does not recognize fighting for ruling. Islam does not recognize fighting for the honour of an individual or group.⁵

For *jihād* to be in the way of Allah, it also has, as Qutb repeatedly stresses in many places in the *Zilāl*,⁶ to be disconnected from any other interests. Al-Bukhārī states that all actions which are not carried out for the sake of Allah (*lā yurād bihi wajh Allah*) are regarded as invalid and useless in this world and the Hereafter.⁷ Qutb comprehends that this is very important because it would ensure that the faith of the Muslims is present at every time. Thus, the Muslims, especially while performing *jihād* would feel that they belong to the party of Islam and their enemy belongs to the party who are astray, thus increasing their determination and effort when encountering the unbelievers.⁸ Therefore, realizing the importance of the right intention, Qutb refers to al-Mawdūdī quoting two important *hadīth* regarding this matter:

A Bedouin asked the Prophet, upon whom be peace, "A man may fight for the sake of booty, and another may fight so that he may be mentioned by the people, and a third may fight to show his position [bravery]: Which of these is regarded as fighting in Allah's Cause? The Prophet upon whom be peace said, "He who fights so that Allah's word (Islam) should be superior, fights in Allah's Cause."

⁴Qur'ān, 4:74.

⁵Qutb, *Zilāl*, vol.2, p.707.

⁶ See vol.1, p.264, vol.2, p.707, 709, 919, vol.3, 1544 and 1545.

⁷See Ibn Rajab, *Jāmi' al-'Ulūm wa-al-Hikām*, p.5.

⁸Qutb, *Zilāl*, vol.1, p.266.

Another tradition reported by Abū Dawūd and al-Nasā'ī from Ubayy with a good chain of transmission said: A man came to the Prophet asking him, "O Prophet, did you see a man who fights for a reward (booty) and fame, what is his position?" The Prophet said, "There is nothing for him." He repeated three times, "There is nothing for him." Then the Prophet said, "God does not accept deeds except those done with full sincerity to God and to seek his pleasure."

In contrast, the unbelievers are fighting in the way of evil (*tāghūt*). As the Qur'ān clearly states:

Those who believe fight in the way of Allah, and those who reject faith fight in the way of Evil (*tāghūt*).⁹

According to al-Mawdūdī,¹⁰ *tughyān* in the Arabic dictionaries (*ma'ājim*) is defined as crossing the limit, and everything that is committed which falls beyond the legal boundary is defined as *tāghin*. *Taghā al-sail* means "the water rose above its normal height." This definition also can be seen in the Qur'ān:-

We, when the water (of Noah's Flood) overflowed beyond its limit (*lammā taghā al-mā'*), carried you (mankind), in the floating (Ark).¹¹

The parable using *tughyān* mentioned above describes water crossing the limit. The same analogy is also applied if a person crosses the limit in the sense that he commits sinful acts, enslaves people by force and coerces people into his service while seizing their possessions and denying their countries wealth and products. This is also what Qurṭb called as fighting in the way of evil (*al-qitāl fī sabīl al-tāghut*). Furthermore,

⁹Qur'ān, 4:76.

¹⁰Al-Mawdūdī, *al-Jihād fī Sabil Allah*, p.16.

¹¹Qur'ān, 69:11.

the aim of the struggle is to establish a system which is opposed to Islam.¹²

From the above explanations it can be concluded that God will not accept *jihād* unless it is carried out sincerely for His sake and to attain His pleasure, and is free from other personal, group or tribal purposes and interests. Thus, it is understood that the condition of being for the sake of Allah is obviously central to the Islamic concept.

As mentioned before, every action must be accompanied by the intention to attain the pleasure of Allah. However, just that is not enough because one may commit crimes for the desire to attain Allah's pleasure. As a sacred obligation, Quṭb believes that *jihād* must also attain specific and lawful aims in this world. Thus, he concludes that the aim of *jihād* is to establish freedom of belief, freedom of *da'wa* and the establishment of the Islamic system. All these aims will be discussed in detail later. Finally, Quṭb says,

Jihād is proclaiming in order to establish Allah's authority on the earth; to arrange human affairs according to the true guidance provided by Allah; to abolish all the satanic forces and satanic systems of life; to end the lordship of one man over others, since all men are creatures of Allah and no one has the authority to make them his servants or to make arbitrary laws for them.¹³

Quṭb believes that the act of *jihād*, as mentioned before, not only involves participating in war but also comprises other activities which lead to the establishment

¹²Quṭb, *Zilāl*, vol.3, p.1545. See also vol.2, p.709.

¹³Quṭb, *Ma'ālim fī al-Ṭarīq*, trans. into *Milestones*, International Islamic Federation of Student Organization, 1978, p.127.

of these aims. Therefore, the act of emigration from Mecca to Medina during the Prophet's time is also regarded as *jihād* in the way of Allah.¹⁴ Also, donations (*infāq*) aiming to attain Allah's pleasure while renouncing any attachment to worldly benefits and interests is regarded as *jihād* in the way of Allah.¹⁵

Jihād is a noble task, highly regarded by Allah, for which the reward is Paradise. Therefore, every single step which is taken should be within the parameters laid down by Allah and His Messenger. Mere intention does not fulfil the obligation of *jihād*, as it also requires the Muslims to observe and follow the laws of fighting mentioned in the Qur'ān and *hadīth*. In common with the majority of Muslim scholars, Quṭb also implies that military *jihād* must be waged according to the principles of justice and humanitarian concern that were observed by the Prophet. He ordered Muslims to refrain from killing civilians, inflicting unnecessary injury, causing unnecessary destruction and killing by the use of fire. In regard to this, the Qur'ān says:-

Fight in the way of Allah those who fight you. But do not transgress the limits; For Allah loveth not transgressors.¹⁶

In the light of the above verse, Quṭb¹⁷ mentions several *hadīth* regarding the ethics of war (*ādāb al-qitāl*) which have been laid down by the Prophet. These are as

¹⁴Quṭb, *Zilāl*, vol.4, p.2438.

¹⁵*Ibid*, vol.3, p.1545.

¹⁶Qur'ān, 2:190.

¹⁷Quṭb, *Zilāl*, vol.1, p.188.

follows:-

It is narrated by Ibn ʿUmar that a woman was killed in a battle fought by the Messenger of Allah (may peace be upon him). He disapproved of the killing of women and children.¹⁸

It has been reported from Sulayman b. Burayd through his father that when the Messenger of Allah (may peace be upon him) appointed anyone as leader of an army or detachment, he would especially exhort him to fear Allah and to be good to the Muslims who were with him. He would say, "Fight in the name of Allah and in the way of Allah. Fight against those who disbelieve Allah. Make a holy war; do not embezzle the spoils; do not break your pledge; and do not mutilate (the dead) bodies; do not kill the children..."¹⁹

Abū Hurayra narrated, "Allah's Apostle sent us in a mission (i.e. *sariyya*) and said, "If you find so-and-so (two men of the Quraish) burn both of them with fire". When we intended to depart, Allah's Apostle (peace be upon him) said: "I have ordered you to burn so-and-so, and it is none but Allah who punishes with fire, so, if you find them, kill them"²⁰.

The aims of *jihād*

This issue is raised by Qutb²¹ when he discusses the two verses of the Qur'ān which say, "And fight them until there is no tumult or oppression, and there prevails justice and faith in Allah"²² and "There is no compulsion in religion".²³ He states that,

¹⁸Siddiqi, Abdul Hamid, *Sahih Muslim*, vol.3, SH.Muhammad Ashraf, Lahore, 1976, p.943.

¹⁹*Ibid*, p.943.

²⁰Al-Bukharī, *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, trans. Khan, Dr.Muhammad Muhsin, vol.4, Hilal Yayinlari, Turkey, 1976, p.160. Siddiqi, Abdul Hamid, *Sahih Muslim*, vol.3, SH.Muhammad Ashraf, Lahore, 1976, p.943. Qutb, *Milestones*, International Islamic Federation of Student Organization, 1978, p.127. Al-Mawdūdī, *al-Jihād fī Sabil Allah*, p.16. Ibn Rajab, Zayn al-Dīn Abū al-Faraj ʿAbd al-Rahman ibn Shihāb al-Dīn ibn Aḥmad, *Jāmiʿ al-ʿUlūm wa-al-Ḥikam*, Dār al-Maʿrifah, Beirut, n.d.

²¹Qutb, *Zilāl*, vol.1, p.293-295.

²²Qur'ān, 2:193.

²³Qur'ān, 2:256.

in light of these verses, some of the enemies of Islam describe them as contradictory and conclude that Islam is a violent movement which imposes its beliefs upon people by force. Ironically, some of them in search of the answer made a cunning defense against this accusation, extinguishing the spirit of *jihād* and undermining its role in spreading the religion of Islam.²⁴ Moreover, they assert to the Muslims that there is no longer any need for recourse to *jihād* in the present day or the future. One of the reasons which is given by those writers, according to Qutb, is that the war between the imperialists and the Muslim countries is not a religious war which requires *jihād*, but rather a war to gain material and worldly benefits.²⁵ Therefore, Qutb listed three main aims (*ahdāf*) of *jihād* in order to repudiate these false claims. They are as follows:-

i) the freedom of belief

One of the aims of *jihād* is to guarantee the Muslims their freedom of belief

²⁴Qutb's comments were in response to the writing of T.W.Arnold in *The Preaching of Islam* in which Qutb believes that it distorts the actual meaning of *jihād*. Arnold says "Thus, from its very inception Islam has been a missionary religion, both in theory and in practice, for the life of Muhammad exemplifies the same teaching, and the Prophet himself stands at the head of a long series of Muslim missionaries who have won an entrance for their faith into the hearts of unbelievers. Moreover, it is not cruelties for the evidences of the missionary spirit of Islam, any more than with sword in one hand and Qur'an in the other¹ - but in the quiet, unobtrusive labours of the preacher and the trader who have carried their faith into every quarter of the globe. Such peaceful methods of preaching and persuasion were not adopted, as some would have believed, only when political circumstances made force and violence impossible or impolitic, but were most strictly enjoined in numerous passages of the Qur'an".¹This misinterpretation of the Muslim wars of conquest has arisen from the assumption that wars waged for the extension of Muslim domination over the lands of the unbelievers implied that the aim in view was their conversion. See Arnold, T.W., *The Preaching of Islam*, SH.Muhammad Ashraf, Lahore, 1979, p.5 -10.

²⁵Qutb, *Zilāl*, vol.1, p.294.

(*‘aqīda*) and defend them from religious persecution. It is also employed to guarantee their right to life and wealth. Qutb develops this principle with a reinterpretation of the verse which states that, "Tribulation (*fitna*) is worse than killing".²⁶ The verse means that oppression of the followers of a certain religion on the basis of belief is worse than killing. Qutb believes that *fitna* in the verse refers not only to physical torture but also the establishment of a tyrannical system imposed upon the Muslims. Also included in the meaning of *fitna* are the unbelievers who protect and promote systems such as Communism, not only prohibiting the teaching of religion but at the same time promoting the teaching of godlessness. They may also allow promiscuity and the consumption of alcohol. Indeed, it becomes their priority to prevent people from following Islam.²⁷ Belief (*‘aqīda*) is built on the complete understanding of the sovereignty (*uluhiyya*) and lordship (*rubūbiyya*) of Allah.²⁸ Islamically speaking, persecution on religious grounds means assaulting the most sacred things in human life. Therefore, it is regarded by Qutb as worse than killing, in concord with the statement made by Allah.²⁹ Furthermore, belief is very valuable, not only to Muslims but to others also³⁰. Moreover, Islam, which is a system to govern the lives of Muslims, is established on the concept of belief, as Qutb says in his book *Ma‘ālim fī*

²⁶Qur'ān, 2:217.

²⁷Qutb, *Zilāl*, vol.1, p.294.

²⁸*Ibid*, vol.2, p.1137.

²⁹*Ibid*, vol.1, p.189.

³⁰*Ibid*, vol.1, p.294.

al-Tarīq "Milestones":-

Dīn is a way [of life] (*manhaj*) and a system which governs life, and in Islam it is based on creed (*‘aqīda*); but its generality is larger than creed.³¹

This is also understood by Mousalli in his discussion of Qutb's concept of religion as he states:³²

Thus, perceiving religion as a *nizām* of life which includes the metaphysical and is accompanied by a social order leads Qutb to postulate the equality of every system of life with religion; religion is derived from the system regulating life, and is unlimited by abstractions, metaphysical doctrines, emotions or beliefs.

In *al-Mustaqbal li-hadhā al-Dīn*, Qutb refers to belief as a means to clarify various issues, including the existence of the universe and the creation of the human being and its role in the universe. Belief is also a guideline and source from which to establish a code of conduct in every aspect of human life including moral, political, economic and social.³³ Finally and more importantly, as Qutb says:

The requirement of Islamic belief is that it take shape in living souls, in an active organisation, in a viable community, and that it take the form of a movement struggling against the *jāhili* environment while also trying to remove the influences of *jāhili* society in its followers, because they were people of *jāhiliyya* before the faith entered their souls, and the influence of *jāhiliyya* might remain in their hearts and minds as well as in their lives. The Islamic belief has a much wider range of action than simply academic discussions, as it not only addresses itself to hearts and minds but also includes

³¹See Fayyad, Samira, "Sayyid Qutb: His Thought and Literature", Unpublished Ph.D Thesis, University of Manchester, 1977, p.163.

³²Mousalli, Ahmad S., *Radical Islamic Fundamentalism: The Ideological and Political Discourse of Sayyid Qutb*, American University of Beirut, 1992, p.73.

³³Qutb, *al-Mustaqbal lihadhā al-Dīn*, trans. into Malay, International Islamic Federation of Student Organization, Riyadh, 1991, p.1.

practices and morals.³⁴

Moreover, Qutb believes that the first verse permitting the Muslims to fight was revealed merely to defend their belief against the persecution of the polytheists in Mecca. Since the signs (*sha'ā'ir*) and worship in Islam are regarded as part of piety (*taqwā*), they should also be protected in the defence of religious belief.³⁵ To Qutb, this is because Allah did not let the Muslims encounter the unbelievers only through their difference in belief, but at the same time, through the continuous persecution inflicted upon the Muslims which was unbearable.³⁶ Qutb also insists that the struggle endured by all messengers, from the Prophet Adam to the Prophet Muḥammad, was merely to defend this belief and transform all aspects of people's lives in accordance with the law of Allah.³⁷ Therefore, if the Muslims are permitted to kill in order to defend themselves and their property, by logic and religion it is preferable to kill in order to defend their belief.³⁸

According to Qutb, the defence of the freedom of belief of the Muslims is not restricted only to their territory, but also includes foreign territory. In the *Dār al-Ḥarb* where the inhabitant Muslims were denied the right to practise their religious belief,

³⁴Qutb, *Milestones*, p.69.

³⁵Qutb, *Zilāl*, vol.4, p.2424.

³⁶*Ibid.*

³⁷*Ibid*, vol.4, 1903 & 1882.

³⁸*Ibid*, vol.1, p.294.

the Muslims of the *Dār al-Islām* are responsible for freeing these fellow Muslims, as the Qur'ān states:-

And what is wrong with you that you fight not in the cause of Allah, and for those weak, ill-treated and oppressed among men, women and children whose cry is, "Our Lord! Rescue us from this town whose people are oppressors, and raise for us from You one who will protect, and raise for us from You one who will help."³⁹

Also, in *Surat al-Anfal* verse 72:

....As to those who believed but came not into exile: Ye owe no duty of protection to them until they come into exile; But if they seek your aid in religion, it is your duty to help them, except against a people with whom ye have a treaty of mutual alliance, and remember Allah seeth all that ye do.

Ibn Kathīr states that "those people are not entitled to spoils of war (*ghanīma*), and not one-fifth of it (*wa-lā fī khumusihā*), except if they were present during the fighting (*illa mā ḥaḍarū fīhi al-qitāl*)".⁴⁰ Whereas al-Ṭabarī argues that "their right of protection and assistance is reduced (*wilāyatuha nāqiṣa*), but not terminated. If the conflict occurred between them and the unbelievers, they have to be assisted on the basis of the existence of a similar denominator (*al-qāsim al-mushtarak*) which is belief, except if the attacker has an agreement with the Muslims, in this case, it is not permissible to assist them unless the action was initiated by the unbelievers".⁴¹ Quṭb regards those people who did not emigrate with the Prophet and, understandably, those

³⁹Qur'ān, 4:75.

⁴⁰Ibn Kathīr, *Tafsīr*, vol.2, p.516.

⁴¹See Al-Ṭarīqī, Dr. 'Abd Allah Ibrāhīm, *al-Walā' wa-al-'Adā' fī 'Alāqat al-Muslim bighair al-Muslim*, Darulifta Office, London, p.16.

who do not reside in the Islamic state as not belonging to the Muslim community (*lam yu'tabarū 'aḍḍā' fī al-mujtama' al-Muslim*). Therefore, they do not enjoy similar rights and privileges to other Muslims who reside in the Islamic state.⁴² As they are bound by the same belief, the Muslim community has to protect and assist them if their belief is threatened and persecuted by the unbelievers. However, this privilege ceases if the Muslim community has an agreement with the unbelievers, even if their religion and belief are being tried. This is because the interest and protection of the Muslim community or Islamic state is preferred to the interest of a small minority.⁴³

ii) the freedom of *da'wa*

Da'wa is the act of calling people to the religion of Islam.⁴⁴ It has been a very important element in the establishment of Islam throughout history. It is often regarded as significant because without *da'wa* or *jihād al-lisān* there would be no *jihād al-qitāl* or *bi-al-yad*.⁴⁵ *Jihād* is one of the tools employed to call people to Islam. This was

⁴²This is mentioned in the same verse of the same *sūra*, "Those who believed, and adopted exile, and fought for the faith, with their property and their persons, in the way of Allah, as well as those who gave (them) asylum and aid - these are (all) friends and protectors, one of another", Qutb regards those who emigrate with the Prophet in this verse and reside in the Medina as living in the Islamic state and they alone enjoy several rights provided by the state.

⁴³Qutb, *Zilāl*, vol.3, p.1559.

⁴⁴According to Kepel, "In the context of twentieth century Egypt, Muslim Brotherhood propaganda (*da'wa*) was generally addressed to the Muslim masses more than to the Coptic Christian minority, and still less to the Jews. The majority population, although Muslim, had forgotten that Islam was a total and complete system, and instead restricted religion to the domain of private piety. The objective of the Brotherhood's message was to lead them to rediscovery of this broader significance of Islam". Kepel, Gilles, *The Prophet & Pharaoh*, trans.by Jon Rothschild, Al Saqi Books, London, 1985, p.56.

⁴⁵Sa'īd Ḥawwa, *Jund Allah: Thaḳāfatan wa-Akhlāqān*, Dār 'Ammār, Beirut, 1988, p.377.

mentioned by Quṭb in several places in the *Zilāl* when discussing *jihād al-qital* as one of the ways of *daʿwa*. When he explains the rationality behind the use of *jihād bi-al-sayf* (*jihād* with the sword), he says "...because the reality of people's lives and the nature of the way of *daʿwa* requires it (*tabīʿat tarīq al-daʿwa tulzimuhu*) [to recourse to war]".⁴⁶ In fact, retaliation against enemy transgression is also regarded by Quṭb as one of the methods or constituents (*dustūr*) of *daʿwa*.⁴⁷ Thus, *daʿwa* cannot be separated from *jihād*. As Quṭb says, "Indeed, *jihād* is not an extrinsic phenomenon (*mulābasa ṭārīʿa*) from the phenomena of those days (*min mulābasāt tilka al-fatra*), but it is a necessary companion to spread the *daʿwa* (*darūra muṣāḥaba li-rakb hadhihi al-daʿwa*)".⁴⁸

However, in other places he described *daʿwa* only as a part of *jihād*, especially when discussing the stages of *jihād* from Ibn Qayyim's point of view, and concludes that *jihād* in the Meccan period after the revelation of verse "O thou wrapped up (in a mantle), Arise and deliver thy warning!"⁴⁹ was only *jihād* with the tongue, or in other words, *daʿwa* itself.⁵⁰ Saʿīd Hawwā also holds similar views and perceived that *daʿwa* is synonymous with *jihād* with the tongue, which he defines as, "spreading Islam and establishing evidence with it against the unbelievers, hypocrites and

⁴⁶Quṭb, *Zilāl*, vol.2, p.742.

⁴⁷*Ibid*, vol.4, p.2202.

⁴⁸*Ibid*, vol.2, p.741.

⁴⁹Qur'ān, 74:1-2.

⁵⁰Quṭb, *Zilāl*, vol.3, p.1431.

transgressors (*tablīgh al-Islām wa-iqāmat al-ḥujja bihi‘alā al-kāfirīn wa-al-munafiqīn wa-al-fāsiqīn*). *Jihād* with the tongue includes spreading the teaching of Islam privately or publicly, lecturing, public speaking, writing and also involvement in politics when someone stands up against a tyrant leader and struggles to topple that government.⁵¹ In any case, all these arguments clearly present the importance of *da‘wa* in spreading the message of Islam, which sometimes requires *jihād* to maintain its viability.

The aim of *da‘wa* in the existence of an Islamic state, as Yasīn mentions, even goes as far as to ensure that the teaching of Islam is being practised by the Muslim community under the application of the principle of enjoining good and prohibiting evil. However, where the Islamic state does not exist the aim of *da‘wa* is simply to establish the Islamic state.⁵² This is also the understanding of Fā’iz on Qutb’s concept of *da‘wa* which is not simply preaching Islam in front of the material strength (*al-sultān al-māddī*), but one of the distinctive features of *da‘wa* (*al-sima al-ra‘īsiyya li-al-da‘wa al-Islamiyya*) is its serious practicality: in the sense that it treats people as they actually are, and faces reality in accordance with practical conditions. Since it comes into conflict with the *jāhiliyya* in the realms of ideas and belief and the *jāhiliyya* is a practical system of life supported by a powerful material authority, the

⁵¹Hawwa, Sa‘īd, *Jund Allah*, p.376-377.

⁵²Yasīn, Dr.Muḥammad Na‘īm, *Jihad*, trans. into Malay by Ismail b. Mohd Hassan, Yayasan Islam Terengganu, Kuala Terengganu, 1985, p.101&104. See also Hawwa, Sa‘īd, *Jund Allah*, p.375.

Islamic movement has to face all these realities appropriately. For example, Qutb states that the movement uses the methods of *da'wa* and explanation for reforming ideas and beliefs; and it uses physical power and *jihād* for abolishing the organisations and authorities of the system which prevents people from reforming ideas and beliefs and forces them to obey their aberrant ways and causes them to serve human lords instead of the Almighty Lord.⁵³ Fā'iz further states that *da'wa*, from Qutb's point of view, does not confine itself to mere preaching in confrontation of physical power, as it does not use compulsion for changing the ideas of people but, by its nature is a practical movement.⁵⁴

As the only system in Qutb's view which will guarantee peace for human beings, access to Islam should be given without any restriction or obstacle. He recognizes that the existence of tyrannical systems (*nuzum tāghiya*) is a major obstacle to this access. They not only prevent people from listening to the message but also persecute those who accept it. Therefore, Islam employs *jihād* in order to remove the system and establish a just system which guarantees the freedom of *da'wa*.⁵⁵ This is also supported by al-Zuhaylī, who states that the aim of *da'wa* is to purify the soul, protect the mind, to reform life and to build a civilized society. Islam is a way of life

⁵³Fā'iz, Ahmad, *Tarīq al-Da'wa fī Zilāl al-Qur'ān*, vol.1, al-Shurka al-Muttaḥida liltauẓī', Beirut, 1978, p.79 & 87. See also Shabīb, Jamal al-Dīn, *Manhaj Sayyid Qutb fī al-Da'wa*, Dār al-Bashīr lilthaqāfa wa-al-'Ulūm al-Islāmiyya, 1994, p.60.

⁵⁴This kind of understanding is similar to the concept of *jihād* held by Qutb. See Qutb, *Zilāl*, vol.3, p.1432.

⁵⁵*Ibid*, vol.1, p.294.

and a complete system that governs every aspect of human life. This message should be spread to every single person and they have the right either to accept or reject it. *Da'wa* does not entail forcing others to accept Islam.⁵⁶

Finally, it is the nature and aim of *da'wa* to allow people to know their true God and worship Him alone, and to free people from every authority except that of God⁵⁷. Because of this, it has been confronted in every period of human history, ideologically as well as physically and materially. Therefore, Qutb believes that the combination of *jihād* and *da'wa* is necessary to materialize those aims. It cannot be achieved by *da'wa* alone as he says:

The establishing of the dominion of God on earth, the abolishing of the dominion of man, the taking away of sovereignty from the usurper to revert it to God, and the bringing about of the enforcement of the Divine Shari'ah and the abolition of man-made laws cannot be achieved only through preaching.⁵⁸

The establishment of the Islamic system has to be by both *da'wa* and *jihād*, as he says:

If through "preaching" beliefs and ideas are confronted, through "the movement" material obstacles are tackled. Foremost among these is that political power which rests on a complex yet interrelated ideological, racial, class, social and economic support. Thus these two - preaching and the movement - united, confront 'the human situation' with all the necessary methods. For the achievement of the freedom of man on earth- of all mankind throughout the earth - it is necessary that these two methods should work side

⁵⁶Al-Zuhaylī, Dr. Wahbah, *Āthār al-Ḥarb fī al-Fiqh al-Islāmī*, Dār al-Fikr, Beirut, 1992, p.67.

⁵⁷Qutb, *Zilāl*, vol.3, p.1555.

⁵⁸Qutb, *Milestones*, p.104-105.

by side.⁵⁹

Kepel alleges that Qutb's idea and insistence on the combination of *da'wa* and *jihād* to bring about the establishment of Islamic system resulted from the continuous persecution of the members of Muslim Brotherhood by the Nasser regime which did not happen before he took office.⁶⁰ Kepel states:-

...faced with the totalitarian state being created by Nasserism, Islamicist militants must not limit themselves to words alone. Qutb's contribution to the theoretical legacy of the more traditional Muslim Brethren was his clear perception of the structural change in the relation between state and civil society that had been inaugurated with the Nasser regime. Before 1952, most Egyptian governments had not seriously impeded the preaching of al-Banna and his disciples. The Muslim Brethren were able to proclaim their hatred of British colonialism, their contempt for the local Westernized elites, and their hostility to the political parties. But once the independent state had decked itself in the colours of 'Arab socialism' and critics were forced to choose between silence, exile, prison, and the gallows, Brotherhood propaganda became impossible. Qutb held that those who chose silence or who muted their voices were in error. The mode of action had instead to be adapted to the form of state repression; against *jahiliyya*, the militants of the Islamicist movement, the 'vanguard of the *umma*', had to resort to a 'movement', to a struggle that would not be purely verbal.⁶¹

iii) establishing Islamic order (*al-Nizām al-Islāmī*)

According to Mitchell, the establishment of an Islamic order is the ultimate aim

⁵⁹*Ibid*, p.106.

⁶⁰Although Kepel argues that this situation prompted Qutb to write *Milestones*, one should remember that Qutb himself admits that four articles contained in *Milestones* are basically extracted from the *Zilāl*. These include "The Nature of the Qur'anic Method", "Islamic Concept and Nature," "*Jihād* in the Cause of God" and "Revival of the Muslim Community and Its Characteristics." The idea of the combination of *da'wa* and *jihād* to establish an Islamic system can be found in his article '*Jihād* in the Cause of God'. See *Ibid*, p.18.

⁶¹Kepel, Gilles, *The Prophet & Pharaoh*, p.55.

of the Muslim Brothers.⁶² However, Mitchell points out that this phrase is sometimes loosely used to mean a "Muslim state" ; mostly it refers to a state where the implementation of *Sharīʿa* is a key criterion of Islamic order.⁶³ As one of the leaders of the Muslim Brothers, this aim can be identified in many of Qutb's writings including *Zilāl*. He uses several phrases, including "establishment of God's rule on earth" (*iqāmat mamlakat Allah fī al-arḍ*),⁶⁴ "establishing the dominion of Allah on earth" (*sultān Allah fī al-arḍ*),⁶⁵ "enforcement of Divine Law" (*siyādat al-Sharīʿat al-Ilāhiyya*).⁶⁶ and "the establishment of Allah's Religion on earth" (*iqrār dīn Allah fī al-arḍ*).⁶⁷ According to Qutb, all these phrases constitute a challenge to eliminate all forms of system which are based on the concept of the sovereignty of man, and restore rulership to Allah⁶⁸. It should be borne in mind that "God's Law" (*Sharīʿa*), does not mean to Qutb what Mitchell defined as "a set of legal (not political) principles which were regarded as fundamental to Muslim society whatever the particular form of political order". Qutb states:⁶⁹

⁶²Mitchell, Richard P., *The Society of the Muslim Brothers*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 1993, p.234-235.

⁶³*Ibid.*

⁶⁴Qutb, *Zilāl*, vol.3, p.1433.

⁶⁵*Ibid*, vol.3, p.1434.

⁶⁶*Ibid.*

⁶⁷*Ibid.*

⁶⁸*Ibid*, vol.3, p.1433.

⁶⁹ To avoid this confusion, Qutb prefers to use "*manhāj*" in many of his writing. See Fayyad, Samira, *Sayyid Qutb*, p.163.

The *Sharīʿa* of God means all that God has laid down for the organization of the life of mankind. This is embodied in the principles of the creed, the principles of government, the principles of ethics, the principles of behaviour, and the principles of knowledge..... It is embodied in the legal injunctions... which are usually called *Sharīʿa* in its narrow sense which does not give its real content in the Islamic concept.⁷⁰

This definition is supported by Wilfred Cantwell Smith in his recent studies of the concept of *Sharīʿa*, saying,

..... in the formative and classical periods *sharīʿa* was a non-technical term "with which Islamic thinkers were not concerned". To the earlier thinkers, *Sharīʿa* meant as in the Qurʾān, a "way", not a code of law - "a series of activities, not yet a system of incumbencies".⁷¹

As we discussed before, defending belief is only a beginning and merely *daʿwa* is not sufficient to achieve this difficult aim. Therefore, *jihād* which may sometimes result in loss of life, is employed to accomplish the greatest goal; the establishment of Islamic order. The establishment of Islamic order is very important because it produces a distinguished society which Qutb described as "a practical interpretation of the declaration of faith and all its corollaries".⁷² In other words, their devotional acts and daily conduct are all based on submission to Allah alone. It is a system which will hand sovereignty solely to Allah in all aspects of human life. It is based on the law of Allah and rejects any legislation made by a human being.⁷³ An Islamic order

⁷⁰*Ibid*, vol.1, p.164.

⁷¹See Fayyad, Samira, *Sayyid Qutb*, p.164.

⁷²*Ibid*, vol.1, p.139.

⁷³*Ibid*, vol.1, p.295.

is a system where people are called to obey the public, moral, economic and international laws of Islam. This does not mean that every single person is required to embrace Islam because Islam gives them freedom to choose their own religion and conduct their affairs according to that religion. In fact, it is a responsibility of the Islamic state to protect this choice.⁷⁴

This Islamic order can only be applied through authority and power. In this regard, Qutb insists that Islam is a practical religion which cannot be established without power and a state. Islam is a system of life for mankind and is not merely a sense of moral goodness (*mashā'ir wijdāniyya*) living in the heart without authority. It has its own particular system and constitution to guide its followers.⁷⁵ In fact, Islam has its own morality, worship and ritual systems. Thus, it needs an authority to apply the systems which people will obey.⁷⁶

A similar conclusion is reached by al-Mawdūdī, who had a significant impact on Qutb's intellectual development. He asserts that the establishment of state is not a foreign and baseless idea which cannot be found in the Qur'ān.⁷⁷ According to al-Mawdūdī, the idea of establishing a state or acquiring ruling authority to administer

⁷⁴*Ibid.*

⁷⁵*Ibid.*, vol.1, p.601.

⁷⁶Al-Tarabulsi, 'Abdullah, *Al-Taghyīr al-Jazarī fī Fikr Sayyid Qutb*, Dār al-Bayāriq, Beirut, 1993, p.12.

⁷⁷Al-Mawdūdī, Abū A'la', *The Islamic Law and Constitution*, Islamic Publications Ltd., Lahore, 1980, p.165&255.

public life had been suggested by many Islamic scholars such as Ḥasan al-Baṣrī, Qatāda, al-Ṭabarī and Ibn Kathīr. It is clearly stated in the Qur'ān:

Say: O my Lord! Let my entry be by the Gate of Truth and Honour and likewise my exit by the Gate of Truth and Honour; And grant me from Thy presence a ruling authority to aid me.⁷⁸

According to al-Mawdūdī, the ruling authority which is requested by the Prophet includes the power or assistance of a ruling authority, or state, so that the Prophet could, with the force and resources of the coercive power of the state, establish virtue, eradicate evil, put an end to corruption, set right the disruption which had spread throughout society and administer justice according to Allah's law.⁷⁹ He also quotes a *hadīth* of the Prophet which states:⁸⁰

Allah through state power puts an end to that which He does not eradicate through the Qur'ān.

Al-Mawdūdī further says that the prescription of punishments and enunciation of principles of monetary and fiscal policy are meaningless if they cannot be implemented. It follows that they cannot be enforced unless there is a state with authoritative power conferred by society.⁸¹

⁷⁸Qur'ān, 17:80.

⁷⁹Al-Mawdūdī, *Islamic Law and Constitution*, p.165.

⁸⁰*Ibid.*

⁸¹*Ibid*, p.164.

Unlike Christianity, Islam does not tolerate the separation of faith and state, by the slogan "Render unto Caesar that which is Caesar's, and to God that which is God's".⁸² To Qutb's predecessors and the Muslim scholars of his time, the slogan "politics is a part of religion" was acceptable. This is demonstrated by the decision of the council of *'ulama* of al-Azhar University to condemn an article by 'Alī 'Abd al-Rāziq entitled "The Caliphate and the Bases of Power", which was written following the abolition of the caliphate in 1924. The article clearly rejects the historical fact that Prophet Muhammad was a leader as well as a prophet, and that he established Islam with a political government of which he was the head. Thus, al-Rāziq believes that the Prophet was solely a prophet. In his words, "The authority of Muhammad over the believers was the authority of apostleship; it had nothing in common with temporal power." He further says, "This unity which existed from the time of the Prophet was in no respect a political unity. It had none of the aspects of a state or a government. It was never anything other than a religious unity free from any admixture of politics." Finally he concluded, "Muslims are free to demolish this worn-out system (of the caliphate) before which they have debased and humiliated themselves." In other words, he argued that politics is not a part of Islam. As a result, he was forbidden from holding any public office.⁸³

Later, this popular idea was adopted by many other Islamic movements such

⁸²Kramer, Martin, *Political Islam*, Washington Papers, vol.8, Sage Publications, London, 1980, p.24.

⁸³Donohue and Esposito, *Islam in Transition*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 1982, p.29-37.

as *al-Jihād* group. Its leader, Muḥammad^c Abd al-Salam Faraj in *al-Farīda al-Ghā'iba* (The Missing Religious Precepts), states that the obligation of the establishment of the Rule of God over this earth is based on the verse which states⁸⁴,

God has promised to those among you who believed and worked righteous deeds, that He will, of a surety, grant them in the land, inheritance (of power), as He granted it to those before them; and He will establish in authority their religion - the one which He has chosen for them; and that He will change (their state), after the fear in which they (lived), to one of security and peace: "They will worship Me (alone) and not associate aught with Me". If any do reject faith after this, they are rebellious and wicked⁸⁵.

There is no doubt in Qutb's mind that a state is required to implement and enforce this system. However, in the Islamic social order, the existence of a state can never provide the starting point towards the establishment of an Islamic state. Rather, this is provided by the existence of a particular community of Muslims. He says, "The state in Islam is nothing but a natural product of the community and its particular characteristics".⁸⁶

The effort to establish the Islamic state should have priority over the struggle to reform society under the broad aim of enjoying good and forbidding evil, which Qutb believes will affect only certain individuals and a minor part of society, leaving the larger part of it in a state of disobedience to Allah. Therefore, the obligation to act on the principle of enjoying good and forbidding evil, established by the Quran and

⁸⁴Qur'ān, 24:55.

⁸⁵See Youssef, Michael, *Revolt Against Modernity*, E.J.Brill, Leiden, 1985, p.79.

⁸⁶Qutb, *Zilāl*, vol.5, p.3165.

the *hadīth* of the Prophet, is incumbent only after an Islamic society exists. The obligation to achieve this aim becomes eminently clear when considering that there is no greater crime than failing to implement the Islamic order.⁸⁷

This idea is close to the opinion of Shaykh ʿAbd al-Hālim Maḥmūd in the debate on the application of the *Sharīʿa* in Egypt. He rejects the idea that reforming the individual to be a good Muslim should be given priority over the application of Islamic law. To him, law is the most effective means of reforming the individual, therefore all efforts should be made to enable the application of the law before any other programmes are embarked on.⁸⁸

It has become the norm for those who promote the establishment of an Islamic state to be accused of being power-seekers.⁸⁹ Qutb's understanding is that the purpose of the Islamic state is nothing other than to create conditions in which the mass of people will be assured of social justice in accordance with the standards enunciated by God in His Book, which gives explicit instructions for a well-disciplined mode of life; it includes establishing the dominion of God on earth, abolishing the dominion of man, implementing Islamic law and abolishing man-made law.⁹⁰ After so many

⁸⁷*Ibid*, vol.2, p.949-951.

⁸⁸Donohoe and Esposito, *Islam in Transition*, p.241.

⁸⁹Al-Mawdūdī, *The Islamic Law and Constitution*, p.165.

⁹⁰Qutb, *Zilāl*, vol.3, p.1433-1434.

distortions about the nature of the Islamic state, Qutb feels that it is necessary to eliminate the fear of some people on this matter. He says:

We- in modern times - do not aim to establish such a society.... We aim to establish a society equal from the technical and the material sides to the present [modern] society at least. At the same time it will have the spirit, the direction and the essence of the first Islamic society established by the divine path, for that was a high pinnacle in spirit, direction and essence... It was a high pinnacle in its harmony and integration. As for the form, the image and the situations, these are renewable and are defined by evolution of time, by the emergence of needs and by the changes in realities and so forth.⁹¹

Qutb believes that systems other than Islam came to the community after the establishment of Islam. All these systems came to destroy people's beliefs. This is reflected in his remarking that throughout every period of human history the call toward God has been of one nature. Its purpose is "Islam", which brings human beings into submission to Allah, and frees them from servitude to other human beings so that they may devote themselves to the One True God.⁹² Thus, a Muslim community (Islamic state) can come into existence only when individuals and groups of people reject servitude to anyone except God-in addition to Him or exclusively- and come into submission to God, Who has no associates, deciding that they will organise their scheme of life on the basis of this submission.⁹³ In contrast, a *jāhiliyya* society is, to Qutb, the opposite of a civilized one. The Muslim society is civilized because it is characterized by self-control issuing from obedience or submission to God. On the

⁹¹See, Fayyad, Samira, *Sayyid Qutb*, p.161.

⁹²Qutb, *Milestones*, p.80.

⁹³*Ibid*, p.146.

other hand, the *jāhiliyya* society is dominated by *ahwā'* (desires, caprices). Quṭb states:-

In its essence, it [*jāhiliyya*] is the return in government and law to the caprices of human beings, and not to the path (*minhāj*) of God and His *sharīʿa* of life. It is the same whether those caprices are those of an individual, a class, a nation or of a whole generation of people.⁹⁴

Izutsu in his studies also reaches a similar conclusion: *ahwā'*, the principal and immediate cause of going astray (*dalāl*) "may be said to mean, roughly, the natural inclination of the human soul born of lusts and animal appetites....Thus in the Koran *hawā* forms the opposite of *ʿilm* (knowledge), i.e. the revealed knowledge of the Truth."⁹⁵

The argument that the *jāhiliyya* system is dominated by *ahwā'* is also supported by Goldziher, who says:

A *ḥalīm* is what we would call a civilized man. The opposition to all this is the *jāhil*, a wild, violent and impetuous character who follows the inspiration of unbridled passion and is cruel by following the animal instincts: in one word, a barbarian.⁹⁶

Quṭb further says that another characteristic of the *jāhiliyya* is that it does not restrict itself to a particular period of time but is rather a certain type of behaviour. He states:-

Jāhiliyya is not a particular period of time; it is a certain spiritual and

⁹⁴Quṭb, *Zilāl*, vol.2, p.891.

⁹⁵Izutsu, Toshihiko, *Ethico-Religious Concepts in the Qur'ān*, McGill University Press, Montreal, 1966, p.140-141.

⁹⁶Goldziher, Ignaz, *Muslim Studies*, translated from the German by C.R.Barber and S.M.Stern, vol.1, George Allen & Unwin Ltd, London, 1967, p.203.

intellectual state. This state becomes evident as soon as the real values of human life as God wants them to be fall and are replaced by artificial values derived from mutable desires. This is the problem which mankind faces today, with its advanced technology, as it did in the barbarism of the past⁹⁷

The explanation is similar to Goldziher's finding, which rejects a notion that *jāhiliyya* is a time before the coming of Islam. As he says:-

Following the general Muslim explanation we tended to think of the "*Jāhiliyya*" in contrast to "Islam", as "the time of ignorance." This conception is wrong.⁹⁸

Izutsu also supports this argument when he says that "*Jahiliyyah* is still a personal quality, not the name of a historic age".⁹⁹ He further says:

Again from the Islamic point of view this refusal of self-surrender on the part of Jahili Arabs was nothing but a manifestation of human presumptuousness, insolence and arrogance caused by man's ignorance of himself and of God.¹⁰⁰

According to this definition, Islam and *jāhiliyya* are opposite and irreconcilable. This leads Qutb to designate all the existing systems in the world today as *jāhiliyya*. Qutb says:

Included among these is the communists' system, first because it denies the existence of Allah and believes that the universe was created by 'matter' or by 'nature'. Second, because the way of life it adopts is based on submission to the Communist party and not to Allah...

⁹⁷Qutb, *Zilāl*, vol.6, p.3329.

⁹⁸Goldziher, Ignaz, *Muslim Studies*, p.202. See also Shams al-Dīn, Muḥammad Maḥdī, *Baina al-Jāhiliyya wal-Islām*, Dār al-Kitāb al-Lubnānī, Beirut, 1975, p.19.

⁹⁹Izutsu, Toshihiko, *God and Man in the Koran*, vol.5, The Keio Institute of Cultural and Linguistic Studies, Tokyo, 1964, p.201.

¹⁰⁰*Ibid*, p.203.

All idolatrous systems or societies are also among the *jāhiliyya* system. Such societies are found in India, Japan, the Philippine and Africa. Their *jāhiliyya* character consists, first, of the fact that they believe in other gods besides Allah, in addition to Him or without Him; secondly, they have constructed an elaborate system of devotional acts to propitiate these deities. Similarly, the laws and regulations which they follow are derived from sources such as priests or astrologers or magicians, the elders of the nation, or the secular institutions which formulate laws without regard to the *Sharī'ah* of Allah...

All Jewish and Christian societies today are also *jāhiliyya* societies. They have distorted the original beliefs and ascribe certain attributes of Allah to other beings. This association with Allah has taken many forms, such as the Sonship of God or the Trinity; sometimes it is expressed in a concept of God which is remote from the true reality of God. These societies are *jāhiliyya* also because their forms of worship, their customs and manners are derived from their false and distorted beliefs. They are also *jāhiliyya* societies because their institutions and their laws are not based on submission to God alone...

Lastly, all the existing so-called 'Muslim' societies are also *jāhiliyya* societies. We classify them among *jāhiliyya* societies not because they believe in other deities besides Allah or because they worship anyone other than Allah, but because their way of life is not based on submission to Allah alone. Although they believe in the Unity of Allah, still they have relegated the legislative attribute of Allah to others and submit to this authority, and from this authority they derive their systems, their traditions and customs, their laws, their values and standards, and almost every practice of life.¹⁰¹

According to Kepel, Qutb's definition which regards the present Muslim community as *jāhiliyya* is in contradiction to the well-established dogma of the Muslim Brotherhood. He believes that al-Banna, the founder of Muslim Brotherhood, would not dream of issuing such a statement to his society at that time. He believes that Qutb's conclusion to his analysis was influenced by al-Mawdūdī's "*The Four Technical Terms of the Koran*". More importantly, Qutb's definition sparked a controversy not only among the public, but also Muslim scholars. Among them is

¹⁰¹Qutb, *Milestones*, p.147-154.

Hasan Ma'mun, the Shaykh of al-Azhar, who, represented by the President of the *fatwa* commission, Shaykh ʿAbd al-Latif al-Sibki, branded as blasphemous those who regard *jāhiliyya* as being applicable at any period of time. He then charged Qutb with Kharijism, who also uses the concept *al-hākimiyya* to justify opposition to governments which do not submit their sovereignty to Allah alone. The Shaykh argued that, "The Qur'ān preaches obedience to the Muslims' sovereign, who in return causes justice to reign among his subjects. Moreover, the Shaykh claims that, "Most of the contemporary leaders of the countries of Islam are good".¹⁰² Youssef, who refers to al-Bahansāwī, argues that this idea came about just prior to June of 1967. It was issued due to the continuous persecution of members of the Muslim Brotherhood during their imprisonment by the government's secret police. Consequently, not only did they refuse to acknowledge their loyalty to the government, but they also opposed it.¹⁰³

The controversy did not end at this point. Al-Bahansāwī in his book *Āḍwā' alā Ma'ālim fī al-Tarīq*, defends Qutb's judgement and concludes that there is nothing in Qutb's statement which can be interpreted as accusing the society of being *kāfir*. This situation also prompted Muḥammad Qutb to defend his brother. According to Fayyad,

This conclusion has raised a good deal of opposition. Accusation have been made that Qutb was labelling 'Muslims' as *kāfirs* (*takfīr al-Muslimīn*). Yet Qutb was not the only one who had to face the dilemma of defining the nature

¹⁰²Kepel, *The Prophet & Pharaoh*, p.60.

¹⁰³Youssef, Michael, *Revolt against Modernity*, p.79.

of the society he sought to change. Muḥammad ʿAbduḥ, for instance, refused to identify Islam with "traditions, laws or institutions, even ones as venerable as al-Azhar's", and another contemporary scholar, Abū al-Ḥasan al-Nadwī, describes the current situation in Muslim societies as "apostasy for which there is no Abū Bakr"..... His [Qutb's] writer brother, Muḥammad Qutb has this to say about this issue: "The [later] writings of Sayyid Qutb are centered on one theme - that is, the exposition of the real meaning of 'There is no god but God' - because he felt that many people do not realise that meaning in its real sense. [His writings are also about] clarification of the real characteristics of faith (*imān*) as they are in the Qur'ān and the Prophetic Traditions, because he felt that some of these characteristics were neglected or ignored". He reports Qutb as saying that "we are representatives of a message not a state, a message whose function is to expose the facts to people and not to judge them."¹⁰⁴

According to Qutb, it is a practical requirement of the religion of Islam to destroy or confront any system which rejects its sovereignty. This situation is regarded by Qutb as "a continuous war between the Islamic system and the *jāhiliyya* system".¹⁰⁵

The Qur'ān says:

And they will never cease fighting you until they turn you back from your religion if they can.¹⁰⁶

According to Qutb, this verse clearly states that the aim of the tyrant or unbeliever is to persecute the Muslims continuously regardless of time and place. This is because the existence of the Muslims is regarded as a threat to their interests. Therefore, they will use whatever means they can to cause the Muslims to deviate.¹⁰⁷ Through this observation, Qutb asserts that *jāhiliyya* is not merely an abstract theory; in fact, under

¹⁰⁴See Fayyad, Samira, *Sayyid Qutb*, p.146.

¹⁰⁵Qutb, *Zilāl*, vol.4, p.1945.

¹⁰⁶Qur'ān, 2:217.

¹⁰⁷Qutb, *Zilāl*, vol.1, p.227.

certain circumstances it has no theory at all. Like Islam, it also exists in the form of a society which has its own leadership, its own concepts and values, and its own traditions, habits and sentiments. It is an organised society where there is close cooperation and loyalty between its individuals, and it is always ready and willing to defend its existence, whether consciously or unconsciously. It crushes all elements which seem to be dangerous to it. When *jāhiliyya* takes the form, not of a "theory" but of an active movement in this fashion, then any attempt to abolish this *jāhiliyya* and to bring people back to Allah which presents Islam merely as "theory" is undesirable, rather, it is useless. Therefore, Qutb believes that Islamic order should challenge the *jāhiliyya* in every aspect of life.¹⁰⁸

Qutb's assertion of the necessity of establishing Allah's authority in this world certainly does not end at only one, or even a handful of, Islamic states, but his vision reaches beyond that to encompass every part of the world. This great ambition and task can only be completed by forming an Islamic-bloc or caliphate, through the co-operation of Islamic states. Although Qutb himself does not explicitly express this ambition, his intention can be understood through his writings. For example, he says:-

Defence of the homeland of Islam is not the ultimate objective of the Islamic movement of *jihād* but is a means of establishing the Divine authority within it so that it becomes the headquarters for the movement of Islam, which is then to be carried throughout the earth to the whole mankind, as the object of this religion is all humanity and its sphere of action is the whole earth.¹⁰⁹

¹⁰⁸Qutb, *Milestones*, p.82-83.

¹⁰⁹Qutb, *Zilāl*, vol.3, p.1441.

From this statement, it can be concluded that the institution of a caliphate, consisting of a number of Islamic states which are headed by a single government, is needed in order to establish divine authority on this earth. This huge task cannot be carried out by only one or even a few states. As Muḥammad ʿAbd al-Salam Faraj says, "A Caliphate must be based on the existence of a (territorial) nucleus (from which it can grow). This (nucleus) is the Islamic State. "Whosoever dies without having taken upon himself (the obligation of) a pledge of allegiance does not die as a Muslim". "Pledge of allegiance" means "allegiance to the Caliphate".¹¹⁰ Furthermore, the fact that the doctrine of the Muslim Brotherhood underlines the objective of the creation of caliphate, supported Qutb's secret ambition. For example, Al-Bannā in his speech entitled, "Between yesterday and today", explains to his followers that the general aim of the Muslim Brotherhood is to establish the dominion of Islam over the earth. This can only be achieved after freeing Muslim countries from foreign occupation, and the establishment of free Islamic states broadcasting the teaching of Islam to all mankind.¹¹¹ Also, one important aim underlined by al-Bannā is the unification of the Islamic countries under one authority in order to proclaim and spread Islam to all mankind, until there is no oppression and the religion belongs to Allah.¹¹²

Regarded as an ideologue to the Muslim Brotherhood, Qutb must have realized the need to establish the caliphate, at the time when the Muslims were struggling to

¹¹⁰See Jansen, Johannes J.G., *The Neglected Duty*, Macmillans Publishing Company, New York, 1986, p.165-166.

¹¹¹Al-Banna, Ḥasan, *Majmūʿat Rasā'il*, p.107.

¹¹²*Ibid*, p.178.

prevent the seizure of their territories by the Western powers after the abolishment of the Ottoman Caliphate in 1924. Furthermore, this idea is not new, but it was championed by earlier Muslim thinkers, such as Al-Afghānī,¹¹³ Ridā¹¹⁴ and ʿAbduh,¹¹⁵ who were regarded by members of the Muslim Brotherhood as the great figures of the modern reform movement.¹¹⁶ More importantly, this is a religious duty which is obligatory upon every Muslim. As Ibn Taymiyya states, in his book *al-Siyāsa al-Sharʿiyya*: "Religion will not be established except with *khilāfa*."¹¹⁷ According to Abū Zahra,¹¹⁸ the proposition that, "Prophetic succession requires that the *Imām* exist among Muslims to protect their temporal interests, to protect their religion" is one of the most basic foundations of Islamic political thought. From this, it becomes an obligation to establish an Islamic Caliphate.

¹¹³According to Keddie "The main line of action and thought suggested by the letter is in accord with Afghānī's words and deeds from the time he left Egypt until the end of his life, and whatever the letter's date, it provides evidence of his trend of thought in his Pan-Islamic Phase. Keddie, Nikki R. *Sayyid Jamāl ad-Dīn 'al-Afghānī*, University California Press, London, 1972, p.133.

¹¹⁴In response to the abolishment of the Ottoman Caliphate, Ridā wrote a book entitled "Al-Khilāfat au al-Imāmat al-ʿUzmā". He says that the obligation to establish this office is a consensus of the Companions of the Prophet and rationally, without the caliph, the law cannot be implemented nor the welfare of the community be protected. See Kerr, Malcolm H., *Islamic Reform*, University of California Press., Los Angeles, 1966, p.159.

¹¹⁵According to Cragg "ʿAbduh believed strongly in the *umma*, or national community, as the form of Islamic polity, though after the period of the active association with Jamāl-al-Dīn, he bent his main energies to intellectual and doctrinal tasks, aiming to ensure both a progressing and conserving Islam. Cragg, Kenneth, *Counsels in Contemporary Islam*, Edinburgh at the University Press, Edinburgh, 1965, p.41.

¹¹⁶Mitchell, Richard P., *The Society*, p.321.

¹¹⁷Al-Ṭarābulṣī, ʿAbdullah, *Al-Taghyīr al-Jazarī fī Fikr Sayyid Qutb*, Dār al-Bayāriq, Beirut, 1994, p.11.

¹¹⁸See Ismael, Tareq Y. & Jacqueline S., *Government and Politics in Islam*, Francer Printer (Publishers), London, 1985, p.7.

C. The characteristics of the *mujāhidīn*

Jihād in the way of Allah is not restricted to certain periods of time; it is a continuous duty which is incumbent until the day of Judgement. It is a well-established institution which can be found in the Qur'ān and the traditions of the Prophet. Before *jihād* is declared, it is an obligation on the authorities to make sufficient preparation spiritually and physically. One important factor in terms of the physical aspects of *jihād* is the characteristics of those who participate in *jihād*. This has been discussed extensively by the Muslim jurists such as Mālik ibn Anas, Ibn Qudāma, Ibn Hammām, Ibn Rushd, al-Bahūtī and others.¹ They underline several conditions which have to be fulfilled before anyone is allowed to participate in *jihād*. These are as follows:

i) being Muslim.

ii) being legally adult, which excludes minors. This is supported by the tradition concerning Ibn 'Umar:

The Messenger of Allah inspected him on the day of Uhud, when he was a fourteen-year-old boy and did not allow him to fight. Then, on the day of the Trench, when he was a fifteen-year-old boy, he inspected him and allowed him

¹Ibn Qudāma, Abī Muḥammad 'Abd Allah bin Aḥmad b. Maḥmūd, *al-Mughnī*, vol.10, Dār al-Kutub al-'Ilmiyya, Beirut, n.d., p.366. Anas, Mālik, *Mudawwanat al-Kubrā*, vol.5, Dār al-Kutub al-'Ilmiyya, Beirut, 1994, p.184. Ibn Hammām, Kamāl al-Dīn Muḥammad ibn 'Abd al-Wāhid al-Siwāsī, *Sharḥ Faṭḥ al-Qadīr*, vol.5, Dār al-Kutub al-'Ilmiyya, Beirut, 1995. Qalyūbī, Shihāb al-Dīn Aḥmad ibn Aḥmad ibn Salāma, *Hāshiyatān: Qalyūbī wa 'Umayra*, vol.4, Dār al-Fikr, Beirut, n.d., p.216. Ibn Rushd, Abū al-Walīd Muḥammad ibn Aḥmad ibn Aḥmad, *Bidāyat al-Mujtahid*, vol.1, Dār al-Kutub al-'Ilmiyya, Beirut, n.d., p.381. Al-Bahūtī, Maṣṣūr ibn Yūnus ibn Idrīs, *Kashāf al-Qinā'*, vol.3, Dār al-Fikr, Beirut, 1982, p.35-36. Al-Khāṭib, Muḥammad al-Sharḥīnī, *Iqnā' fī Hil Alfāz Abī Shujā'*, vol.2, Dār al-Ma'ārif, Pulau Pinang, n.d., p.253.

to fight.²

iii) being a free man, which exempts slaves. This is because their masters run the risk of losing those who are regarded as property.³

iv) being male which excludes women. This is based on the tradition of the Prophet related by 'Ā'ishah:

I asked the Prophet's permission to take part in *jihād*. He answered: "Your *jihād* is the pilgrimage".⁴ Also, their physical attributes do not fit with the nature of *jihād*.

v) being in sound health. The ill, blind and paralyzed are exempted, as the Qur'ān mentions:

No blame rests upon the frail or upon the sick, or upon those who find nothing to contribute, if they are honest to Allah and His Messenger; against those who do well there is no opening (i.e. way to the infliction of punishment); Allah is forgiving, compassionate.⁵

There is no blame upon the blind, or upon the lame, or upon the sick - whosoever obeys Allah and His Messenger, He will cause him to enter gardens through which the rivers flow; but whosoever turns away, He will inflict upon him a painful punishment.⁶

vi) those who possess the necessary means for an expedition, i.e. equipment, provisions, a mount and subsistence for their dependents. This is based on the verse of the Qur'ān which says,

²Al-Bukhārī, *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, translated into English by Dr. Muḥammad Muḥsin Khan, vol.4, Hilal Yayinlari, Ankara, 1976, p.83.

³Ibn Qudāma, *al-Mughnī*, p.366.

⁴Al-Bukhārī, *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, trans. vol.4, p.83.

⁵Qur'ān, 9:91.

⁶Qur'ān, 48:17.

Nor (is the blame) on those who came to you to be provided with mounts, and when you said: "I cannot find an animal to mount you"; they turned away, their eyes full of tears for grief that they found not anything to contribute.⁷

However, the Hanafites do not mention this category.

viii) those who have been given permission by their parents to participate in *jihād*. This is in accordance to the following tradition of the Prophet:

°Abd Allah bin °Amr narrated: A man came to the Prophet asking his permission to take part in *jihād*. The Prophet asked him, "Are your parents alive?" He replied in the affirmative. The Prophet said to him, "Then exert yourself in their service".⁸

ix) debtors who obtain permission of their creditors.

However, in a situation where *jihād* becomes an individual obligation, all the above exempted parties are required to participate. These are: when the enemy attacks the Muslims; when the *Imām* commands an individual or a group of people to participate in *jihād*; when someone makes a vow do so and when meeting the enemy on the battlefield.⁹

However, Qutb believes that merely these sets of conditions are not sufficient to secure success on the battlefield, considering the enormous amount of energy and

⁷Qur'ān, 9:92

⁸Al-Bukhārī, *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, trans., vol.4, p.153.

⁹Ibn Qudāma, *Mughnī*, p.366. Id, Dr. °Arīf Khalīl Abū, *al-°Alāqāt al-Khārijīyya fī Daulat al-Khilāfa*, Dār al-Arqām, Birmingham, 1990, p.101. Peters, Rudolph, *Islam and Colonialism: The Doctrine of Jihad in Modern History*, The Hague:Mouton, 1979, p.15-17.

struggle required. Therefore, he suggests that certain qualities, apart from the basic conditions which are mentioned above, should be possessed by the *mujāhidīn*. He presents the model of a group of the Companions of the Prophet, whom Qutb calls the vanguard (*al-Qā'ida al-Ṣulba*) and who, he believes, have distinctive qualities and characteristics.

The vanguard (*al-Qā'ida al-Ṣulba*)

Originally, the vanguard was the name given by Qutb to a group of distinguished Companions of the Prophet whom he regarded as the defenders or vanguard of Islam at the time of the Prophet. For Qutb, their role was not only in spearheading the advance of Islam in the Arabian Peninsula, but also defending the sacred sites of Islam from any incoming threat, especially from the polytheist Quraysh. Qutb believes that without this group of Companions, it would have been impossible for Islam to spread so widely at that time. The creation of this group was an on-going process which took several years before members achieved the necessary qualities. It began with the first individuals to embrace Islam among the people of Mecca who are also called Muhājirīn (those who migrated from Mecca to Medina). According to Qutb, they show their ability to persevere despite being oppressed by the polytheist Quraysh, though some of them failed and returned to their prior religion.¹⁰ Later, they were joined in the vanguard by the Ansār (the citizens of Medina who helped and

¹⁰Qutb, *Zilāl*, vol.3, p.1571.

gave aid to the Muhājirīn) when the first Muslims emigrated to Medina. One may question the grounds on which Qutb includes the Anṣār in the vanguard. To Qutb, the Anṣār inclusion is not an accidental event; it was Allah's plan to choose this group of people judging from their commitment during the Pledge of ʿAqaba.¹¹ As Qutb says:

Thus, Allah chose among the first to embrace Islam of the Muhājirīn who had the extraordinary unique elements (*al-ʿanaṣīr al-farīda al-nādira*) as the vanguard (*al-qāʿida al-sulba*) of this religion in Mecca, and after that in Medina; together with the first to embrace Islam of the Anṣār who, despite not having suffered in the beginning what the Muhājirīn endured, but, their pledge (*baʿʿa*) to the Prophet - (Pledge of al-ʿAqabah) showed that they had true character (*dhū ṭabīʿa aṣīla*) which conforms with the character of this religion. Ibn Kathīr said in his exegesis: Muḥammad bin Kaʿb al-Qurazī and others related: ʿAbd Allah ibn Rawāḥa said to the Prophet (on the night of ʿAqabah): "Set as conditions for your God and yourself whatever you like." The Prophet said: "I stipulate of my God that you should worship only Him and not associate any others with Him, and I stipulate myself that you should defend me as you defend yourself and your property." They said: "What is the reward if we fulfill this." The Prophet said: "Paradise". They replied: "It is a profitable business; we will not reduce it and we will not ask to reduce it".¹²

Qutb¹³ also quotes from Ibn Kathīr's *al-Bidāya wa al-Nihāya* regarding the event where the Anṣār demonstrated their true characteristics which entitled them to be included in the group of the vanguard. It was related that for the first ten years of the Prophet's mission in Mecca, nobody wanted to give their assistance and protection to him. Even worse, people from places outside Mecca like the Yemenis or the tribe of Muḍar were reminded to keep away from the Prophet. Ironically, in the midst of

¹¹*Ibid*, vol.3, p.1571.

¹²*Ibid*.

¹³*Ibid*, vol.3.p.1572.

this mass rejection of his message, a group of people from Yathrib (Medina) listened to his message and gave their pledge to the Prophet to obey him and sacrifice their wealth in the times of hardship or ease, to enjoin good and forbid evil, to disregard people's opinion in pursuit of the propagation of Islam, and to defend the Prophet as they would defend their own persons, children and wealth. After that, Jābir stood up and said:

"Wait people of Yathrib! We take this long journey because we know that he is the Messenger of Allah. If we support him today, we will be opposed by all the Arabs, the best of you will be killed and you will be afflicted by the sword. If you are steadfast in this and accept the Prophet, Allah will reward you, but, if you fear for yourselves and flee from him, make this clear to the Prophet so that he will ask forgiveness from Allah for you.. They said: "O! Sa'd put your arm together with us. By God, we will not withdraw from this pledge and we will not violate it forever." Jābir relates: "We stood up, we gave our pledge to him, he accepted it and stipulated conditions upon us, by that, he promised us Paradise".¹⁴

According to Qutb, the pledge that the Anṣār took is clear evidence of their great potential to be the vanguard of Islam in the future. This is because Qutb believes that they knew exactly the requirements and consequences of their pledge to the Prophet. They fully understood that the surrounding Arabs, especially the Quraish, would not remain calm and let them live in peace. Thus, this is the essential quality required in order to become the vanguard of Islam¹⁵. This is confirmed by Ibn Ishāq who describes how the Anṣār prepared to participate in the battle of Badr when they were asked by the Prophet, although they were not obliged to do so. According to Ibn

¹⁴*Ibid.*

¹⁵*Ibid*, vol.3, p.1571.

Ishāq, this is because in the second pledge of al-^ʿAqaba, the Anṣār promised only to protect the Prophet in Medina and were not required to do so outside it. For this reason, the expeditions which took place before Badr were restricted to the Muhājirīn.¹⁶ In commenting on this incident, Ibn Ishāq states:

News came to him that Quraysh had set out to protect their caravan, and he told the people of this and asked their advice. Abū Bakr and ^ʿUmar got up and spoke well. Then al-Miqdād ibn ^ʿAmr got up and said: "O Messenger of God, go where God tells you for we are with you. We will not say as the children of Israel said to Moses, 'you and your Lord go and fight, and we will stay at home, but you and your Lord go and fight, and we will fight with you....' Then he said, "Give me advice, O men," by which he meant the Anṣār. This is because they formed the majority, and because when they had pledged allegiance to him at al-^ʿAqaba they stipulated that they were not responsible for his safety until he entered their territory, and that when he was there, they would protect him as they did their wives and children. So the Messenger of God was afraid that the Anṣār would not feel obliged to help him unless he was attacked by an enemy in Medina, and that they would not feel it incumbent upon them to go with him against an enemy outside their territory. When he spoke these words, Sa^ʿd ibn Mu^ʿādh said, "It seems as if you mean us," and when he said that he did, Sa^ʿd said, "We believe in you, we declare your truth and we witness that what you have brought is the truth, and we have given you our word and agreement to hear and obey; so go where you wish, we are with you; and by God, if you were to ask us to cross this sea and you plunged into it, we would plunge into it with you; not a man would stay behind. We do not dislike the idea of meeting your enemy tomorrow. We are experienced in war, trustworthy in combat. It may well be that God will let us show you something which will bring you joy, so take us along with God's blessing".¹⁷

The existence of these two groups of people from the Muhājirīn and the Anṣār as a vanguard was very crucial at the time when Islam was still in the early stage of

¹⁶Ibn Ishāq, *Sīrat Rasūl Allah*, trans. A.J.Guillaume, p.293-294. See also Al-^ʿUmarī, Akram Diyā', *Madīnan Society at the time of the Prophet*, vol.2, trans.by Hudā Khattāb, The International Institute of Islamic Thought, Virginia, 1991, p.34.

¹⁷Ibn Ishāq, *Sīrat Rasūl Allah*, trans., p.293-294.

its existence in Medina. They formed a solid foundation in the building of the Medinan society, but it cannot be denied that signs of hypocrisy and disloyalty emerged within the society. For Qutb, this resulted from the mass conversion of people to Islam, including a few influential figures who still wanted to safeguard their position and interests, especially within their tribe. Of the people who converted to Islam, some of them were hypocrites and some of them embraced to Islam merely by imitation. Their understanding of Islam was very weak and they failed to grasp the zeal of true Islam. Furthermore, their behaviour did not conform with the characteristics required by Islam. Also, from Qutb's observation of the revelation of the Medinan *sūrah*, he found that there was an enormous and continuous attempt made by subversive elements to destroy the harmony of the new Medinan society under the patronage attributed to these three forces: the Quraysh and their allies, the Jews and their allies, and people who hated Islam and its society. With all these conspiracies at work, all sorts of negative attributes emerged in the community such as weakness in belief, hypocrisy, and covetousness, especially during critical moments.¹⁸ In support of this, Qutb quotes some of the verses of the Qur'ān:-

And when your Lord caused you (O Muḥammad) to go out from your home with the truth, and verily a party among the believers disliked it; Disputing you concerning the truth after it was made manifest, as if they were being driven to death, while they were looking (at it). And remember when Allah promised you (Muslims) one of the two parties (of the enemy i.e. either the army or the caravan) that it should be yours, and you wished that the one not armed (the caravan) would be yours, but Allah wanted the truth by His Words and to cut off the roots of the disbelievers (i.e. in the battle of Badr).¹⁹

¹⁸Qutb, *Zilāl*, vol.3, p.1572-1573.

¹⁹Qur'ān, 8:5-7.

....So as for those whose hearts there is a deviation they follow that which is not entirely clear thereof, seeking *al-fitna* (polytheism and trials etc.), and seeking for its hidden meanings, but none knows its hidden meanings save Allah. And those who are firmly grounded in knowledge say: "We believe in it; the whole of it (the clear and unclear verses) are from our Lord". And none receive admonition except men of understanding.²⁰

Have you (O Muhammad) not observed the hypocrites who say to their friends among the people of the Book who disbelieve: "(By Allah) If you are expelled, we (too) indeed will go out with you, and we shall never obey anyone against you, and if you are attacked (in fight), we shall indeed help you". But Allah is Witness, that they are verily liars. Surely, if they (the Jews) are expelled, never will they (hypocrites) go out with them, and if they are attacked, they will never help them. And if they do help them, they (hypocrites) will turn their backs, so they will not be victorious.²¹

O you who believe! Take your precautions, and either go forth (on an expedition) in parties, or go forth all together. There is certainly among you he who would linger behind (from fighting in Allah's Way). If a misfortune befalls you, he says, "Indeed Allah has favoured me in that I was not present among them". But if a bounty (victory and booty) comes to you from Allah, he would surely say - as if there had never been ties of affection between you and him - "Oh! I wish I had been with them; then I would have achieved a great success".²²

According to Qutb, this situation continued to occur for several years. However, prior to the Conquest of Mecca through constant education (*tarbiyya*) based on the Quranic method, Medinan society had achieved the qualities of a real vanguard under the leadership of the Prophet. At this point, through his reading of verses of the Qur'ān and the traditions of the Prophet, Qutb discovers that there are several categories of people which can be seen within the vanguard itself.²³ These are:-

²⁰Qur'ān: 3:7.

²¹Qur'ān, 59:11-12.

²²Qur'ān, 4:71-73. Then followed by these verses: 47:36-37, 58:14-22, 5:51-53 and 60: 1-4.

²³Qutb, *Zilāl*, vol.3, p.1575.

i) The first to embrace Islam of the Muhājirīn and the Anṣār. The Qur'ān says:

And the first to embrace Islam of the Muhājirūn and the Anṣār and also those who followed them exactly (in Faith), Allah is well-pleased with them as they are well-pleased with Him. He has prepared for them Gardens under which rivers flow (Paradise), to dwell therein forever. That is the supreme success.²⁴

ii) Those who fought in the Battle of Badr. The Prophet said:

May God look upon those who fought at Badr and say, "Do whatever you like, for now Paradise is yours or...for now I have forgiven your sins".²⁵

iii) Those who gave the Pledge of Ridwān in Ḥudaibiyya. The Qur'ān says:

Indeed, Allah was pleased with the believers when they gave their pledge to you (O Muḥammad) under the tree. He knew that was in their hearts, and He sent down tranquillity upon them, and He rewarded them with a near victory.²⁶

iv) Those who fought and gave their wealth before the Conquest of Mecca.

The Qur'ān states:

...Not equal among you are those who spent and fought before the conquering (of Mecca) (with those among you who did so later). Such are higher in degree than those who spent and fought afterwards. But to all, Allah has promised the best (reward). And Allah is aware of what you do.²⁷

After the Conquest of Mecca, Quṭb believes that the Muslim community existing at that time failed to imitate the characteristics and quality of the vanguard as it was in Medina prior to the Conquest of Mecca. This was due to the mass

²⁴Qur'ān, 9:100.

²⁵Al-ʿAsqalānī, Aḥmad ibn ʿAlī ibn Ḥajar, *Fath al-Bārī*, vol.7, Dār al-Diyān li-al-Turath, Qāhira, 1988, p.313.

²⁶Qur'ān, 48:18.

²⁷Qur'ān, 57:10.

conversion of people to Islam, even bigger than before, as a result of the defeat of the Quraysh, the expulsion of the Jews and later on the victory over the Hawāzin and Thaḳīf tribes. The victories over the Quraysh and the Jews were very significant. This is because Qutb regards the Quraysh and the Jews as the first and third major forces respectively in the Arabian Peninsula at that time.²⁸

Qutb also observes that despite the fact that the vanguard still existed at that time, the impact of the different levels of belief and behaviour within the Muslim community can be seen shortly after the Conquest of Mecca. One expedition after another demonstrated that the Muslim army was not as solid as in the Battle of Badr, an example being the defeat of the Muslim army during the initial stage of the battle of Ḥunayn. According to Qutb, this was due to the participation of two thousand soldiers from the people who converted to Islam after the Conquest of Mecca. They were, according to Qutb, short of training both physically and spiritually which caused real chaos in the ranks of Muslim army. These negative attributes can also be seen clearly, for example, in the expedition to Tabūk. The Qur'ān states:

Had it been a near gain (booty in front of them) and an easy journey, they would have followed you, but the distance (Tabuk expedition) was long for them, and they would swear by Allah, "If we only could, we would have come forth with you". They destroy their own selves, and Allah knows that they are liars.²⁹

Therefore, from the above explanation it is clear that Qutb believes that the

²⁸Qutb, *Zilāl*, vol.3, p.1576.

²⁹Qur'ān, 9:44.

characteristics and qualities of the first vanguard of *mujāhidīn* should be embodied in order to receive assistance (*al-naṣr*) from Allah. There are three crucial attributes of the first vanguard described by Qutb:-

- i) strong relationship with Allah
- ii) ability to withstand trial and persevere
- iii) being strong in military aspects.

This can be understood from several statements made by Qutb:

It is indeed, Allah, praise be with Him, who knows that this is the right method to educate the first community and to establish *al-Qā'ida al-Sulba* for this belief (religion). And without constant tribulation there will be no relentlessness and steadfastness in encountering pressure. And this degree of strength, sincerity, absoluteness (*tajarrud*), persistence (*iṣrār*) and continuity in the way of Allah are required to confront the grievance, suffering, killing, maltreatments, expulsion, starvation, small numbers (*qillat al-ʿadad*) and absence of material assistance.³⁰

With regards to the initial defeat of the Muslim army at Ḥunayn, Qutb says:

...this is because not all the soldiers from the *al-Qā'ida al-Sulba al-Khālīṣa*, were fully trained and organized (*tarbiyatuhā watanāsuqahā*) in a long period of time starting from [the battle of] Badr until the Conquest [of Mecca].³¹

From Qutb's point of view, those who have weakness and disloyalty in their hearts only weaken and threaten the ranks of the *mujāhidīn*. Also, their presence does not increase the strength of the army, but rather causes chaos and disorder. Therefore,

³⁰Qutb, *Zilāl*, vol.3, p.1577.

³¹*Ibid.*

it is better not to have them present in the army. His belief is grounded from the following verse of the Qur'ān:

Had they marched out with you, they would have added to you nothing except disorder, and they would have hurried about it in your midst (spreading corruption) and sowing sedition among you, and there are some among you who would have listened to them. And Allah is the All-Knower of the wrongdoers.³²

As Qutb mentioned above, there are three important attributes of the first vanguard which should also be emulated by *mujāhidīn*.

i) Strong belief (*imān*) in Allah

Strong belief is a crucial part of preparation for the *mujāhidīn* because fighting to Qutb occurs not only on the battlefield but also in the heart i.e. against our own conceptions, feelings and desires.³³ As mentioned before, the *mujāhid* to Qutb is not only a Muslim but has also acquired strong belief in Allah. In interpreting the verse which says "The bedouins say: 'We believe.' Say: 'You do not believe but you only say, "We have surrendered (in Islam)", for Faith has not yet entered your hearts'."³⁴ Qutb regards Islam only a means which enables one to be rewarded for good deeds by Allah. In other words, "Islam" will prevent one's good deeds from vanishing as do

³²Qur'ān, 9:47.

³³Qutb, *Zilāl*, vol.1,p.457.

³⁴Qur'ān, 49:14.

the deeds of unbelievers.³⁵ This is close to Izutsu's description of Islam which states that Islam is only the first step in the faith, consisting of a shallow belief which has not yet penetrated deep into the heart. In referring to the above verse, he argues that when someone declares their Islam, it implies that he has just joined the community of Muslims, which does not guarantee that he has "belief" in the true sense of the word.

Belief is very important in relation to the obligation of *jihād*. To Qutb, when someone feels belief with peace and firmness, it will induce them prove it in the reality of this world. Thus, Qutb believes it will push someone to unite the feeling that they have in their heart with their actions in life. They will feel aggravated when a separation is made between the firm belief in the heart and the reality surrounding them. Certainly, considering the reality which is inflicted on the Muslims nowadays, Qutb's idea implies that it will inspire the *mujāhidīn* to sacrifice their wealth, energy, time, and even their life, for the sake of *jihād*. Qutb always stresses that belief is a combination of the attestation of the heart and the physical implementation of it.³⁶ Thus, firm belief will emanate in branches of good deeds from a particular individual.³⁷ Also, Qutb regards belief as "dynamic and positive. It is movement, action, construction and flourishing..... directed to Allah".³⁸ This is very close to the view of Izutsu who states: "The genuine faith must work as the most powerful motive

³⁵Qutb, *Zilāl*, vol.6, p.

³⁶*Ibid*, vol.6, p.3349.

³⁷*Ibid*, vol.6. p.3966.

³⁸*Ibid*, vol.6, p.3967.

that actuates men to good works; if not, the faith is not genuine".³⁹

Qutb also insists that belief makes people's existence meaningful, including that of the *mujāhidīn*. With belief, their conception of duty and obligation in this world becomes clear. They realize that their role is to free human beings from servitude to other human beings. Consequently, they realize that this aim can only be achieved by sacrificing their persons and wealth. Although on the surface they may lose the enjoyment and pleasure of this world and even their lives, with firm belief all this negative thinking can be eradicated.⁴⁰

From the belief that Qutb describes, it can be implied that the *mujāhidīn* should realize that they are classified in the party of believers in the same way as those that were under the leadership of the prophets Noah, Abraham, Moses, Jesus and Muḥammad. They are called the righteous servants of Allah and this title was given to them due to their efforts to uphold the religion of Allah. Thus, the fulfilment of the duty of *jihād* is only a continuation of the efforts of these prophets and a materialization of that aim.⁴¹

It seems that all of these discussions are the result of Qutb's experiences in life

³⁹Izutsu, Toshihiko, *Ethico Religious Concepts in the Qur'ān*, McGill University Press, Montreal, 1966, p.185.

⁴⁰Qutb, *Zilāl*, vol.6, p.3351.

⁴¹*Ibid.*

before and after his study of the Qur'ān. He says:

And it eradicates the feeling of life in the period of destruction (*ḍayā'*) and trouble (*al-qalaq*), the life before a life under the shade of the Qur'ān, and before Allah takes [me] to His noble shade (*qabla an ya'khudha Allah biyadi ilā zillihi al-karīm*).⁴²

Finally, faith has always been Qutb's major concern and priority, considering its importance and effect on individual life. He devotes himself to this course which is demonstrated through his exegesis of *Sūrat al-An'ām*. Here, in its introduction, Qutb reveals how the focus of the Meccan revelations was the important issue of faith, although the manner of its presentation varied according to the style of the Qur'ān. This period witnessed the verses of the Qur'ān revealing the secret of human existence: who he is, where he comes from, the purpose of his creation, where he will go in the end, Who brought him into life and to Whom he will return. Interestingly, Qutb argues that the Qur'ānic exposition of this central issue did not take only a few years, but required thirteen years to really clarify it.⁴³

Qutb also poses several questions: why did the Prophet not concentrate on the issue of Arab nationalism in the midst of crucial tribal warfare, or the issue of social justice during the time where the lower class people were oppressed by the upper class, or the issue of morality which was rampant in the Arab society instead of the issue of the Oneness of God? In answer to this, Qutb argues that all these petty issues

⁴²*Ibid*, vol.6, p.3352.

⁴³*Ibid*, vol.2, p.1004.

can be solved through faith. It provides criteria, creates values, defines the authority from which these criteria and values are to be derived, and prescribes the reward of those who accept this authority and the punishment of those who oppose it. Qutb believes that without this kind of belief or the concept of a higher authority, all values remain unstable.⁴⁴

ii) Ability to stand trial and persevere

Another important quality which is required by the *mujāhidīn* is perseverance. This quality was demonstrated by the vanguard during the Prophet's time especially during the Meccan period when the Muslims were oppressed and persecuted. However, they became the vanguard which spearheaded the spread of Islam later on as a result of their perseverance. According to Qutb, perseverance is a combination of hope, trust and reliance solely on Allah. Qutb says that the Qur'ān emphasises the significance of perseverance. He also insists that enormous energy and struggle are required in order to be steadfast on the right path whether in difficult or easy times. All these require substantial mental and physical strengths which can only be produced through perseverance.⁴⁵ Qutb states that perseverance is an evident attribute possessed by the prophets and messengers.⁴⁶ Thus, it is important to imitate and learn the lesson

⁴⁴*Ibid*, vol.2, p.1005-1008.

⁴⁵*Ibid*, vol.1, p.141.

⁴⁶*Ibid*, vol.5, p.3109.

of their perseverance as it is described in the Qur'ān. One example is the story of the Prophet Job which Quṭb regards as a exemplary trial story. The story shows Job's perseverance despite the suffering and disbelief of his own people and his perseverance after receiving what was bestowed on him.⁴⁷ Quṭb also reminds his readers of the story of the Prophet Jonah who lost his perseverance during his religious mission.⁴⁸

Quṭb's analysis of perseverance, leads him to the conclusion that there are five types of perseverance which the *mujāhidīn* should be aware of:⁴⁹

i) perseverance in controlling lust and desire. In other words, the *mujāhidīn* should be able to control all kinds of negative attributes which would affect his ability in *jihād*

ii) perseverance against people of weakness

iii) perseverance against widespread evil and shameless transgressors

iv) perseverance in the face of the scarcity and weakness of helpers, and long-distance journeys

v) perseverance against exultation during victory and the possession of power, and the temptation (*waswasa*) of Satan during distress.

⁴⁷*Ibid*, vol.4, p.2392.

⁴⁸*Ibid*, vol.4, p.2393.

⁴⁹*Ibid*, vol.

Indeed, it is one of Qutb's fundamental ideas that for every obligation resting upon an individual, he needs sustenance to strengthen and motivate him, internally or externally, in order to maximise the outcome of his actions.⁵⁰ This is also the case of *jihād*, Qutb believes that whatever strength one possesses, his power to remain steadfast will eventually weaken considering the various trials he has to endure in the long struggle of *jihād*. Therefore, the *mujāhidīn* require sustenance in order to maintain their high level of perseverance and commitment.⁵¹ The provision which is required by the *mujāhidīn* is worship (*ʿibāda*). Worship is regarded by Qutb as a method which creates ease and generates a pleasant feeling, despite all the burdens shouldered by the *mujāhidīn*. One of the most important acts of worship which Qutb suggests is prayer. The combination of perseverance and prayer is clearly stated in the Qur'ān:

O you who believe! Seek help in patience and prayer. Truly! Allah is with the patient⁵².

To Qutb this verse is very significant to the course of *jihād*. Prayer to Qutb is "a helper which is inexhaustible (*lā yandub*), a provision which does not run out (*la yanfad*)... a helper which revives a strength, a provision which enhances the heart (*yuzawwid al-qalb*)... ." In fact, prayer is a direct means of connecting people, who are weak, with Allah, who is powerful and the source of help. Qutb perceives that there

⁵⁰*Ibid*, vol.1, p.168.

⁵¹*Ibid*, vol.1, p.142.

⁵²Qur'ān, 2:153.

are many benefits that can be acquired by the *mujāhidīn* through prayer; it is a refreshment (*rauh*), moisture (*al-nadā*), shade (*zilāl*) in the noon, a key to treasures which are priceless, a connection between man and God, and a remedy for weakened and exhausted hearts. This is probably why, according to Qutb, the Prophet increased his prayer during difficult times.⁵³ Qutb argues that if the Prophet was commanded to perform both the obligatory prayer and voluntary night prayers, the need of the *mujāhidīn* of this worship is far greater, if he is to achieve his aim.⁵⁴

In *Sūrat al-Muzzammil*, the role of prayer is clarified, and in his commentary on this *sūra*, Qutb states that praying in the night and reciting the Qur'ān are required in order to enable the *mujāhidīn* to bear the "weighty word" (*qaulan thaqīlan*) and strive in the course of *jihād*. This responsibility requires full commitment, energy, and time, which is why the Prophet said to his wife Khadīja, "The time of sleep has passed O Khādījah".⁵⁵ Then, in verse 10 of the *sūra* the Prophet is specifically commanded to persevere in the face of all the trials and tribulations confronting him. This verse was revealed at the time when the Prophet and his Companions were persecuted by the polytheists in Mecca when *da'wa* was carried out publicly.⁵⁶

⁵³Qutb, *Zilāl*, vol.1,p.142.

⁵⁴*Ibid*, vol.4, p.2247.

⁵⁵*Ibid*, vol.6, p.3744.

⁵⁶*Ibid*, vol.6, p.3746-3747.

The role of prayer is enormous, to the extent that it becomes an obligation to perform it even on the battlefield. For Qutb, this obligation must not be seen as a matter of legal obligation, but rather as a training, a guidance, a teaching and also a preparation for the ranks of the Muslims.⁵⁷ The Qur'ān states:

When you (O Messenger Muhammad) are among them, and lead them in prayer, let one party of them stand up (in prayer) with you and let them take their arms; when they finish their prostrations, let them take their positions in the rear and let the other party come up which has not yet prayed, and let them pray with you taking all the precautions and bearing arms....⁵⁸

In his interpretation of this verse, Qutb states that prayer is one of the most important "weapons" (*silāḥ*) in the battlefield. He further says that people who receive their training from the Qur'ān, according to the method of God, encounter their enemy with the weapon of prayer before any other weapon. Prayer is a symbol of their belief of God and His presence in the battlefield, and a reminder of their noble aim in *jihād*, as well as of their lofty aim in life. This is why Qutb prefers the prayer over and above any other weapon.⁵⁹

Another form of sustenance which will keep the perseverance of the *mujāhidīn* at the highest level is *dhikr* (remembrance of Allah). As with prayer, *dhikr* for Qutb is necessary to release all the physical, mental and spiritual burdens shouldered by the *mujāhidīn* in the course of *jihād*. Qutb also regards *dhikr* as one of the

⁵⁷*Ibid*, vol.2, p.748.

⁵⁸Qur'ān, 4:102.

⁵⁹Qutb, *Zilāl*, vol.2, p.748.

fundamental elements in the method of Islam. The ability to remain patient in the course of *jihād* rests upon both spiritual and physical strength, and material and spiritual assistance. Therefore, the *mujāhidīn* are required to draw close to Allah, who is the source of all these qualities, in order to get all the required strength and assistance which can be achieved through *dhikr*.⁶⁰

According to Qutb, *dhikr* of Allah repeatedly while encountering the enemy on the battlefield was always practiced by the Muslims. This can be seen throughout the history of the Muslim *umma*.⁶¹ Qutb asserts that the history which is described in the Qur'ān is not for the purpose of artistry or for illustrating a concept, but is, more importantly a guidance and milestone for the Muslim community in their survival.⁶²

Examples are:-

i) The incident when the Pharaoh's magicians embraced Islam, which forced Pharaoh to threaten them with severe punishment:

And you take vengeance on us only because we believed in the signs of our Lord when they reached us! "Our Lord! Pour out on us patience, and cause us to die as Muslims".⁶³

ii) The attitude of a group of believers among the Children of Israel during a face to face meeting with Goliath and his army:

⁶⁰*Ibid*, vol.3, p.1528.

⁶¹*Ibid*.

⁶²*Ibid*, vol.3, p.1277.

⁶³Qur'ān, 7:126.

And as they advanced to meet Goliath and his forces, they invoked: "Our Lord! Pour forth on us patience and make us victorious over the disbelieving people".⁶⁴

iii) The attitude of the believers on the battlefield throughout history:

And many a Prophet fought and along with him large bands of religious learned men. But they never lost heart because of that which befell them in Allah's Way, nor did they weaken nor degrade themselves...And they said nothing but, "Our Lord! Forgive us our sins and our transgressions, establish our feet firmly, and give us victory over the disbelieving folk".⁶⁵

iv) The attitude of the Muslim army who were inflicted with defeat at Uhud when they were asked to participate in an expedition to defend Medina from being conquered by the Meccan polytheists:

Those (i.e. believers) unto whom the people (hypocrites) said, "Verily, the people (pagans) have gathered against you, therefore, fear them". But it increased them in faith, and they said: "Allah is Sufficient for us, and He is the best Disposer of affairs"⁶⁶.

Also, it is Quṭb's belief that fasting is necessary to ensure that the *mujāhidīn*'s commitment and perseverance remain firm in managing the obligation of *jihād*. Quṭb asserts that fasting has a long-standing connection with *jihād* in the sense that it is always the case that the people who are obliged to fast are also obliged to undertake the duty of *jihād*. For Quṭb, the *mujāhidīn* really needs this exercise because it has special benefits. For example, it produces an individual with the determination and

⁶⁴Qur'ān, 2:250.

⁶⁵Qur'ān, 3:143-144.

⁶⁶Qur'ān, 3:173.

firm character to encounter difficulties spiritually and physically. As with other forms of worship, fasting strengthens the connection between the *mujāhidīn* and Allah. It prepares the *mujāhidīn* not only for coping with the pressures and hardships of *jihād*, but also with the enjoyment and pleasure resulting from it.⁶⁷

In contrast with the previous qualities, hypocrisy is a negative and dangerous attribute which should be absent from the *mujāhidīn*. Quṭb mentions, for example, how ʿUmar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb, one of the prominent Companions of the Prophet, forced himself to meet Hudhayfa ibn al-Yamān -who had been given knowledge of who the hypocrites were by the Prophet - simply to discover whether he was one of the *munāfiqīn*. According to Quṭb, hypocrisy is a weakness in combating against falsehood and pursuing the right.⁶⁸ In another place, he says that hypocrisy is what is located within belief, which hinders the receipt of truth.⁶⁹ With regard to *jihād*, Quṭb states that refusal to participate in *jihād* is due to a defect (*dakhl*) and weakness (*wahn*) in belief. This is the result of fear or desire of other than Allah, attachment to worldly matters, and isolation from the method of Islam. In other places, Quṭb refers to this weakness as resulting from a "disease" of the heart, as mentioned in the Qur'ān, "In their hearts is disease and Allah has increased their disease".⁷⁰ Their position,

⁶⁷Quṭb, *Zilāl*, vol.1, p.167.

⁶⁸*Ibid*, vol.2, p.779.

⁶⁹*Ibid*, vol.3, p.1655.

⁷⁰Qur'ān, 2:10.

which wavers between the rank of believers and the rank of unbelievers, is caused by weakness of the heart. This weakness always puts them in hesitation and doubt. They do not have firm belief in the aspects of *jihād* such as assistance and a great reward from Allah.⁷¹

From Qutb's commentaries on the verses involving *jihād* on the battlefield, he clearly believes that the attitude of the hypocrites is in sharp contrast to that of the *mujāhidīn*. The hypocrites are people who fear difficulties and suffering and will refuse to accept any kind of responsibility involving those types of risk. The Qur'ān referring to this attitude, states:

Had it been a near gain and an easy journey, they would have followed you, but the distance was long for them, and they would swear by Allah, "If we only could, we would certainly have gone forth with you."⁷²

According to Qutb, this verse refers to the hypocrites who infiltrated the Muslim community after they had failed to impede the spread and domination of Islam in Medina. They refused to participate in *jihād*, in this case the expedition to Tabūk, justifying themselves with various inventive reasons which could not be tolerated. In contrast, the *mujāhidīn* from Qutb's point of view, are people who will not hesitate, and may not even wait for the command to sacrifice their persons and wealth.⁷³ He bases this belief on the following Qur'ānic text:

⁷¹Qutb, *Zilāl*, vol.3, p.1655.

⁷²Qur'ān, 9:42.

⁷³Qutb, *Zilāl*, vol.3, p.1662.

Those who believe in Allah and the Last Day would not ask your leave to be exempted from fighting with their properties and their lives, and Allah is the All-Knower of the righteous.⁷⁴

The reasons for their weakness is explained by Qutb with the following verse:

O you who believe! What is the matter with you, that when you are asked to march forth in the Cause of Allah, you cling heavily to the earth? Are you pleased with the life of this world rather than the Hereafter? But little is the enjoyment of the life of this world as compared with the Hereafter.⁷⁵

Qutb says that this verse was directed to those hypocrites who refused to obey the general call to the battle of Tabūk. There are several factors which contributed to this problem including fear of death and loss of wealth, enjoyment, and comfort. Finally, it can be concluded that hypocrisy, for Qutb, denotes all kinds of negative attributes which prove to be destructive to the *mujāhidīn* and, at the same time, jeopardize the whole process of *jihād*.

iii) Military strength

Apart from spiritual strength, Qutb holds that the physical aspects are also important to enable the *mujāhidīn* to carry out *jihād* successfully. The most important Qur'ānic verse in this respect is,

And make ready against them all you can of power, including steeds of war to threaten the enemy of Allah and your enemy, and others beside them who you may not know but whom Allah does know. And whatever you spend in

⁷⁴Qur'ān. 9:44.

⁷⁵Qur'ān, 9:38.

the cause of Allah shall be repaid unto you, and you shall not be treated unjustly⁷⁶

According to Qutb, preparation, which is referred to in this verse, must be made to the utmost. Obviously, most preparations require material backing; and all Islamic systems are built on the concept of joint responsibility. This idea can also be seen in the aspect of *jihād* which requires material backing to enable people to equip themselves with the necessary weapons before going into battle. These two elements are very important in the course of establishing *jihād*.⁷⁷ In fact, it is an obligation for Muslims to make the necessary preparations. Allah has commanded the Muslims to prepare themselves to the utmost, based on their various circumstances and situations. In this verse in the Qur'ān one of the most significant strengths available at the time of the Prophet is mentioned, namely steeds of war; it is with steeds of war that Allah encourages the Muslims to equip themselves. Regarding the preparation of material power, another verse draws attention to the force derived from iron, a force that strengthens the power of the believers. The verse reads:

We formerly sent Our messengers with clear proofs, and We sent down with them the Book and the Balance, that the people might dispense justice; and We sent down Iron, in which there is violent force and also uses for the People, and (We did so also) in order that Allah might know who would help Him and His messengers in the unseen; verily Allah is strong, sublime⁷⁸.

Iron is a force which is important in times of war and peace. This is evident

⁷⁶Qur'ān, 8:60.

⁷⁷Qutb, *Zilāl*, vol.3, p.1544

⁷⁸Qur'ān, 57:25.

in modern civilization where iron is a material widely used in all aspects of life.⁷⁹ This argument was elaborated by Maḥmūd Shaltūt in very interesting discussions pointing to the strong connection between the Book, the Balance and Iron mentioned in the verse. He argues that iron is the means by which the Balance can stand upright and justice be maintained. He also discusses the two characteristics of iron, namely, its violent force and utility when manipulated and engineered by man in naval, land and aerial war. Finally, he said that the assistance of Allah is granted to those who have subjected the iron and who have won power and strength from it. The significance of iron is demonstrated by history, as when Allah bestowed upon the Prophet David the skill of using this material, in order to protect himself and his followers against tyranny at that time. According to Shaltūt, this story was recorded in the Qur'ān for the Muslims to derive lessons from it.⁸⁰ Quṭb holds the view that this struggle not only needs modern weapons but also all sorts of necessary equipment and strength to frighten the enemy. For this reason, he lists strengths which are required to fulfil the mission of *jihād*:⁸¹

i) in the field of *da'wa*, the strength which will allow people to choose this religion freely and to prevent them from turning away from this religion after having converted to it.

ii) the strength to strike terror (*al-rahb*) in the hearts of an enemy, so that they will not dare to strike against the *Dār al-Islām* which is protected by this strength.

⁷⁹Quṭb, *Zilāl*, vol.6, p.3495.

⁸⁰Peters, Rudolph, *Jihad in Medieval And Modern Islam*, E.J.Brill, Leiden, 1977, p.61.

⁸¹Quṭb, *Zilāl*, vol.3, p.1543.

iii) the strength to frighten enemies to the extent that they are powerless to prevent the spread of Islām.

iv) the strength to eliminate all other nations not governing in accordance with the divine power (*ulūhiyya*) of Allah.

To Qutb, Islām is not merely a system of spiritual belief. Islām is a practical system and suitable as guidance for human beings in all aspects of life, in all times and situations. Therefore, the Muslims have to stand up against other powers and strengths that are supported by materialism to enable their society to apply Islamic systems.

In another place, Qutb indicates the strength which is required, based on the following verse:

O Prophet urge the believers to fight. If there are twenty steadfast amongst you, they will overcome two hundred, and if there be a hundred steadfast they will overcome a thousand of those who disbelieve, because they (the disbelievers) are people who do not understand. Now Allah has lightened your (task), for He knows that there is weakness in you. So, if there are of you a hundred steadfast, they shall overcome two hundred, and if there are a thousand of you, they shall overcome two thousand with the Leave of Allah. And Allah is with the patient.⁸²

For Qutb, the basic rule is that the ratio of number of Muslims to their enemy can feasibly be 1:10. However, during the weakness the ratio is decreased to 1:2. However, some of the Muslim jurists interpret this as meaning that powerful Muslim

⁸²Qur'ān, 8:65-66.

soldiers are prohibited to retreat even though the enemy is ten times larger, and that indicates the weakness of the Muslim soldiers when the enemy is only twice as large.⁸³

The strength of the Muslim ranks also very much depends on their solid and systematic organisation. This becomes an obligation for the *mujāhidīn* in their campaign against the enemy. Also, Qutb believes that Islam will not be established except with systematic organisation (*jamā'ah*) which unites, is ruled by law and has specified aims dictated by the circumstances and capabilities of its members.⁸⁴ He bases this idea on the following verse:

Verily, Allah loves those who fight in His Cause in rows (ranks) as if they were a solid structure.⁸⁵

This also implies that this can only be achieved through mutual support and brotherhood, which is based on belief. Qutb states that belief and brotherhood are two important factors which built up the Muslim community in Medina.⁸⁶ The spirit of brotherhood and mutual support as demonstrated by the first vanguard of the Ansār and the Muhājirīn during the Prophet's time should be in the mind of *mujāhidīn*. This was the time when the persecuted Muhājirīn migrated to Medina and were forced to

⁸³Qutb, *Zilāl*, vol.3, p.1550.

⁸⁴*Ibid*, vol.6, p.3552.

⁸⁵Qur'ān, 61:4.

⁸⁶Qutb, *Zilāl*, vol.1, p.445.

leave all the basic needs of life behind, including their families and wealth. Through the initiative of the Prophet, they established a bond of brotherhood with the people of Medina who treated them as blood relatives (*al-ukhūwa al-dam*).⁸⁷ All this is important to Qutb because the successful implementation of Islamic institutions such as the family, *zakāt*, *waqf*, business or other transactions, including *jihād*, is very much dependent on the collective cooperation (*takāful ijtīmāʿī*) of the Muslim community.⁸⁸ Also, that the Prophet took prompt action to prevent and defuse any dispute or potential quarrel, whether at a personal or group level, within the Islamic community at that time, implies the significance of this cooperation. For example, Qutb states:⁸⁹

Some disagreement occurred between two of the highly esteemed companions of the Prophet, Abū Dharr and Bilāl. Out of temper, Abū Dharr called Bilāl "You, son of a black woman". The Prophet was extremely upset by what Abū Dharr said. He rebuked him saying; "That is too much, Abū Dharr. He who has a white mother has no advantage which makes him better than the son of a black mother".⁹⁰

Qutb quotes from Ibn Ishāq, who describes a dispute between the Aūs and Khazraj in which they nearly slew each other when they were incited by an aide of the Jews. When this news reached to Prophet, he came to them and said: "Do you still propagate *jāhiliyya*, whereas I am still with you (*a-bi-daʿwā al-jāhiliyya wa-anā*

⁸⁷*Ibid*, vol.5, p.2827.

⁸⁸Qutb, *Dirāsa Islamiyya*, p.52.

⁸⁹Qutb, *Zilāl*, vol.6, p.3828.

⁹⁰According to Qutb this tradition of the Prophet is transmitted in two different versions by Ibn Mubārak in his two books *al-Birr* and *al-Ṣalāt*.

baina azhurikum)".⁹¹ He also reports that the Qur'ān reminds the Muslims of what happened to those who had earlier been divided and disunited. The Qur'ān says:

And be not as those who divided and differed among themselves after the clear proofs had come to them. It is they for whom there is an awful torment.⁹²

It can be concluded from Qutb's exposition of the idea of the vanguard of the first generation of Islam that it is his ambition to see a vanguard emerge in this time to spearhead the struggle to revive Islamic consciousness. His ambition can be seen in the introductory chapter of *Ma'ālim*, where he hopes that the book will be useful reading material for a new vanguard of believers. The reason for his concentration on the vanguard is because he realizes that the vanguard is the only group who could be relied on to initiate an Islamic revival. As Qutb says "I have written Milestones for this vanguard which is expected to fulfill the mission".⁹³

In a commentary on Qutb's works *Zilāl* and *Ma'ālim*, Yūsuf al-ʿAzmi, one of the leaders of the Muslim Brotherhood in Jordan, defines the vanguard of the *umma* as a group of elite individuals who "care for" their fellow citizens.⁹⁴ At the present time, there is a specific role for the vanguard (*talāʾiʿ al-baʿth al-Islāmī*) in the midst of human beings rejecting the sovereignty of Allah. They should call people back to the real Islam. The main issue they should stress is the belief in the sovereignty of

⁹¹Qutb, *Zilāl*, vol.1, p.443.

⁹²Qur'ān, 3:105.

⁹³Qutb, *Ma'ālim*, p.12.

⁹⁴Kepel, *The Prophet and the Pharaoh*, p.66.

Allah, and they should guide people to the Islamic way of life. Also, they should preach that people should isolate themselves from the *jāhiliyya* around them. According to Qutb, since the period of *daʿwa* is long, isolation in emotional belief should take place before actual practical isolation. He believes that as long as Muslims do not isolate themselves from the *jāhiliyya* around them emotionally or practically, Allah will not grant success to them. Finally, they should confront the conspirators of the *jāhiliyya* who struggle to destroy this effort.⁹⁵

According to Qutb, the desire to achieve all these efforts should dwell firmly in the hearts of the vanguard of Islam. Otherwise, they will fail to carry out the duty which requires a lot of energy and time, especially in this critical period of human history. Qutb reaches this conclusion through his analysis of history of the prophets including the Prophet Muḥammad. In the beginning, they were alone in delivering the message of Islam to their own people. Later, they were among people who did not accept this message. Thus, two groups were created who differed in their beliefs and way of life. The Muslims had to separate themselves from their own people simply because they could not live in a society which had a completely different way of life from them. Later, this created a confrontational atmosphere between them which finally led the Muslims to overcome their own people. Qutb asserts that all these phenomena had occurred continuously and uninterruptedly throughout history and will continue to occur.⁹⁶

⁹⁵Qutb, *Zilāl*, vol.4, p.1947-1948.

⁹⁶*Ibid*, vol.4,p.1946-1947 see also vol.4, p.1865-1866.

When we look back to the early period of the Muslim Brotherhood during the time of al-Banna, it seems that the idea of creating a vanguard for Islam was in the mind of al-Banna, and this is apparent in the systematic classification of membership. At the third general conference in March, 1935, the membership of the Muslim Brotherhood was divided into four categories:

i) assistant members (*musāʿidīn*)

ii) related members (*muntasibīn*)

iii) active members (*ʿāmilīn*)

iv) strugglers (*mujāhidīn*)

This division was elaborated by Mitchell as follows:

Any Muslim who declared his intention to join, signed a membership card, agreed to pay dues, and was accepted by the group was an "assistant" member. He became a "related" member when he proved his mastery of the principles of the movement, attended regular meetings and committed himself to obedience. He attained the degree of "active" member with his total involvement with the movement- physical training, achievement in Quranic learning, and fulfillment of Islamic obligations such as pilgrimage, fasting, and contribution to the *zakāt* treasury. A fourth degree of membership, that of "struggler" was the ultimate stage, open to only a select handful of the most dedicated.⁹⁷

Perhaps the closest group to the meaning of the vanguard of Islam according to Qutb was created by al-Banna in 1940, namely the special section (*al-nizām al-*

⁹⁷Mitchell, *The Society*, p.183.

khāṣṣ),⁹⁸ also known as the secret apparatus (*al-jihāz al-sirrī*).⁹⁹ The group was formed by al-Banna in response to the problem of Palestine in particular, and for the future of *daʿwa* and the protection of the Brotherhood in general.¹⁰⁰ As Mitchell states:

[This group] was inspired in the first instance as an idea by the concept of *jihād*, formalized into an organization under the pressures of nationalist agitation, the secret apparatus was immediately rationalized as an instrument for the defence of Islam and the Society".¹⁰¹

Maḥmūd ʿAbd al-Ḥalīm,¹⁰² one of the five leaders appointed by al-Banna for this group, states that they had their own training programmes which were similar to military training. Among them were the following:

i) they were divided into several families (*nizām al-usar*) interlinked with the leadership. They also participated in *daʿwa* programmes involving the public

ii) they undertook research on *jihād* and subjects related to it in the Qurʾān, the traditions of the Prophet and both traditional and modern histories of Islam. They also observed various kinds of worship, including fasting

iii) they were trained in difficult works.

iv) they were trained to distribute written works (*tauzīʿ al-manshūrāt*).

v) they were trained in inter-communication using special codes (*al-takhaṭub*

⁹⁸al-Ḥalīm, Maḥmūd ʿAbd, *al-Ikhwān al-Muslimūn*, vol.1, Dār al-Daʿwa, 1994, p.248.

⁹⁹Mitchell, *The Society*, p.

¹⁰⁰al-Ḥalīm, Maḥmūd ʿAbd, *al-Ikhwān al-Muslimūn*, vol.1, p.248.

¹⁰¹Mitchell, *The Society*, p.32.

¹⁰²al-Ḥalīm, Maḥmūd ʿAbd, *al-Ikhwān al-Muslimūn*, p.259.

wa-al-tarāsul bil-shifra).

vi) they were trained in the use of weapons.

v) they exercised profound obedience in both times of ease and difficulty and kept secrecy.

Among their famous tasks in history was their participation in the Palestinian war. Among their contributions was the sending of "technical personnel" to assist in the establishment and training of Palestinian rovers. The most prominent of these was Maḥmūd Labīb, a retired army officer who was later sent to Palestine to carry out this task.¹⁰³ In October 1947, Banna ordered the branches of the Muslim Brotherhood to start preparing for *jihād*; on the 20th, the first "battalion" went on display.¹⁰⁴ Their notable achievement in this war was their assistance in freeing the Egyptian army trapped in the "Faluja pocket".¹⁰⁵

¹⁰³ Mitchell, *The Society*, p.56.

¹⁰⁴ *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁵ *Ibid.*, p.58.

D. The reward of *jihād*

In Qutb's view, Muslims are encouraged to fight for the cause of Allah, and are assured of reward of their efforts; either martyrdom or divine assistance if the effort is pure.¹ Qutb states that the reward which is conferred for those who struggle in the way of Allah is "one of two good things," either safety (*najā*) and assistance or martyrdom and Paradise.² Also, they are promised spoils of war (*ghanīma*) which are regarded as a reward from Allah for their efforts.³ His views are based on the following verse of the Qur'ān: "...He rewards them with near victory, and abundant spoils that they will capture".⁴ In *Milestones*, Qutb concludes that there are rewards which will be bestowed upon the believers for their faith, obedience, steadfastness in the face of calamity, and victory over persecution. They are as follows:

They receive the first part of their reward in the form of contentment of heart, height of understanding, beauty of ideas, liberation from desires and attractions, and freedom from fear and sorrow, in whatever condition they may be.⁵ They receive the second part of their reward in praise, remembrance and honour among the angels, in addition to these among the people of this earth.⁶ Then they receive the greater and the last part of their reward in the Hereafter:

¹Qutb, *Zilāl*, vol.1, p.228.

²*Ibid*, vol.6, p.3297.

³*Ibid*, vol.6, p.3326-3327.

⁴Qur'ān, 48:18-19.

⁵Qutb bases this on the following Qur'anic verse: "Those who believe, and their hearts find satisfaction in remembrance of God. Indeed, remembrance of God brings contentment to the hearts." See Qur'ān, 13:28.

⁶On this point, Qutb quotes verse 7 of *sūra Ghāfir*: "The bearers of the Throne and those around it engage in their Lord's praise, and they believe in Him, and ask forgiveness for the Believers: 'Our Lord! Thy mercy and knowledge encompass everything. then forgive those who repent and follow Thy path, and save them from the torment of Hell.'" See also *Zilāl*, vol.5, p.3071.

easy accounting and great favours. With every kind of reward, they also receive the greatest of rewards: the pleasure of God. It is His purpose for them that He chose them for His purpose, an instrument for His power, so that He makes use of them on this earth as He deems proper.⁷

Assistance

Qutb asserts that one of the fundamental principles of *jihād* is a promise from Allah that he will assist those who make sacrifices for His sake regardless of how enormous the obstacles are. Qutb maintains that this assistance will be given by Allah even the Muslims are few in number and have inadequate weapons compared to their enemy. He states that the victory in the Battle of Badr is clear evidence of this fact. The well-equipped one thousand soldiers of polytheists were beaten by the three hundred ill-equipped Muslims. From his observation of the history of the prophets, Qutb also asserts that assistance comes only from Allah. Allah still helps His prophets despite the absence of assistance from those who refuse to participate in *jihād*.⁸ Qutb's views are based on the following Qur'ānic verses:

And verily , Our Word has gone forth of old for Our slaves- the Messengers. That they verily would be made triumphant. And that Our hosts, they verily would be the victors.⁹

Qutb believes that assistance will be given by Allah only when the Muslim army holds firmly when confronting not only simple trials but severe ones. The trials

⁷Qutb, *Milestones*, p.295-296.

⁸Qutb, *Zilāl*, vol.3, p.1656.

⁹Qur'ān, 37:171-173.

which were endured by the Prophet and his Companions shook (*zalzala*) not only the hearts of believers but also of the Prophet, until they were compelled to ask for help because the trials that they endured were so severe and unbearable. This kind of tribulation and trial according to Qutb, will also be used to test the Muslims after them.¹⁰ This kind of trial was described in the following verses of the Qur'ān:

Or think you that you will enter Paradise without such (trials) as came to those who passed away before you? They were afflicted with severe poverty and ailments and were so shaken that even the Messenger and those who believed along with him said, "When (will come) the Help of Allah?"Certainly, the Help of Allah is near!"¹¹

When they came upon you from above you and from below you, and when your eyes grew wild and hearts reached to the throats, and you were harbouring doubts about Allah. There, the believers were tried and shaken with a mighty shaking.¹²

All these are regarded by Qutb as the internal assistance which is necessary so that the external assistance will be fulfilled.¹³ Qutb insists that the assistance will not be bestowed upon the Muslims merely by praying, reciting the Qur'ān and supplicating to Allah when tribulation is affecting them. However, it does not mean that Qutb rejects all those acts outright; he considers them only as part of the Muslims' preparation for war.¹⁴ As mentioned before, to receive assistance from Allah, the Muslims are also required to make material preparation, military training, and

¹⁰Qutb, *Zilāl*, vol.1, p.218-219.

¹¹Qur'ān, 2:214.

¹²Qur'ān, 33:10-11.

¹³Qutb, *Zilāl*, vol.5, p.3087.

¹⁴*Ibid*, vol.4, p.2426.

organisation, in order to achieve the right balance between spiritual and military needs.¹⁵

According to Qutb, people sometimes perceive "assistance" according to their limited perception whereas assistance can be in various forms, even an apparent defeat. In the case of the Prophet Abraham, although he was caught and put on the fire, his belief and the obligation of *da'wa* remained still deeply embedded in his heart. Qutb regards this incident as an example of one of the forms of assistance. Ibrāhīm was obviously assisted by Allah when He saved him from the fire. It seems that both incidents contradict each other, but to Qutb they are in fact similar in nature.¹⁶

Qutb believes that another important principle regarding assistance is that it is sometimes delayed due to related circumstances. He argues that the assistance which is conferred instantly and easily to those who do not struggle and encounter difficulties will prevent the actual strength possessed by people from emerging. Consequently, the victory will also cease easily. Qutb believes that it is probable that those who were given the victory easily could not effectively conserve their strength and maintain the victory. This is because strength is something which requires a great deal of energy from people in order for them to grasp it.¹⁷ In order to support his

¹⁵*Ibid*, vol.1, p.470.

¹⁶*Ibid*, vol.5, p.3086.

¹⁷*Ibid*, vol.4,p.2426.

argument, Qutb¹⁸ quotes one of the traditions of the Prophet narrated by Khabbāb ibn al-Aratt:

We complained to the Messenger of God while he was resting in the shadow of the *Ka'ba*, saying, "Why do you not ask God to help us? Why do you not pray for us? Then he said, "Before you, there were people who would catch a man, bury him half-way in a hole dug in the ground, then saw his head until it split into two; or would comb him with iron combs between his flesh and bones; yet this would not turn him away from his religion. By God! God will bring this matter to completion, and a time will come when a rider will ride alone from San'ā to Hadramawt and he will have no fear except of God, or of a wolf against his sheep; but you people are in a hurry.¹⁹

Qutb concludes by specifying various reasons which prompted the delay of assistance being granted the Muslims:²⁰

i) to complete the process of training the Muslim community until they reach the necessary level of maturity and complete their preparedness. However, if the assistance is given while they are not fully prepared, it is feared that the victory will not prove long lasting;

ii) to make sure that the Muslim community has striven to their utmost in preparing their strength;

iii) to teach the Muslim community that victory will not be awarded even with all the strength they possess if the help of Allah is not conferred on them. Thus, it educates the Muslim community to trust in Allah in every aspects of their lives;

iv) to strengthen the relationship between the Muslim community and Allah

¹⁸*Ibid*, vol.1, p.142-143.

¹⁹Al-^cAsqalānī, *Fath al-Bārī*, vol.7, p.202.

²⁰Qutb, *Zilāl*, vol.4,p.2426.

especially during times of persecution and tribulation. Basically, this is to ensure their firmness on the path of Islam if assistance and victory are conferred on them;

v) assistance may also be delayed when the Muslim community do not devote their struggle entirely for the sake of Allah, but their aim is for booty, excitement or a show of bravery;

vi) the evil which the Muslims oppose contains some good. By delaying the assistance, Allah wants to take the evil away altogether, so that it will disappear forever.

vii) assistance may also be delayed when the evil opposed by the Muslim community is not fully exposed to the community. If the Muslim community is given victory, some people might relate to the evil and not be convinced that it should be eliminated. Thus, its root would remain in their hearts if the facts were not clear. Thus, Allah lets the evil remain until every part of it is clear to everybody, so that when it disappears, it does so entirely and people will not regret its disappearance.

viii) other reasons which only Allah knows about.

Finally, Qutb reminds the Muslim community that the assistance of Allah is not given without any objective or responsibility. Thus, he lists several grounds for the assistance of Allah of which the Muslim community must be aware, which he takes from the verse which says:²¹

..... And there is no victory except from Allah, the All-Mighty, the All-Wise. That He might cut off a part of those who disbelieve, or expose them to

²¹*Ibid*, vol.1, p.471.

infamy, so that they retire frustrated. You have no part in the matter, whether he turns in mercy to (pardons) them or punishes them, for they are the wrong-doers.²²

These grounds are:

- i) to implement the system of Allah
- ii) to decrease the number of unbelievers by fighting them, to decrease their countries through conquering them, to decrease their power through force, to decrease their material power through booty and decrease their actions through defeat
- iii) to humiliate the unbelievers
- iv) to teach the unbelievers in order that they will convert to Islam
- v) to punish them by taking them as prisoners of war or killing them which leads to them entering Hell.

Means of assistance

The belief in divine intervention which is emphasized by Quṭb leads him to specify various means of assistance (*adāt al-naṣr*) conferred on the Muslims:

- i) The most obvious one is the participation of angels in many battles in order to help the Muslim soldiers, including the Battle of Badr. Quṭb states, following the Qur'ān, that Allah assisted the Muslim soldiers with 1,000 angels. On the day of Badr, the Prophet looked at his companions and they were 300 plus, whilst the polytheists

²²Qur'ān, 3:126-128.

numbered 1,000 men. The Prophet turned toward the *qibla*, stretched out his hands and began to cry out to his Lord, "O Lord, fulfill what You have promised me; grant me what You have promised me. O Lord, if you destroy this group of the people of Islam, You will never be worshipped on earth." He continued to call out to his Lord, stretching forth his hands and facing the *qibla*, until his cloak fell from his shoulders. Then Abū Bakr came and picked up the cloak, and put it back on his shoulders. Then he embraced him from behind and said, "O Prophet of God, you have cried out enough to your Lord. He will fulfill what He has promised you".²³ According to Qutb, after this incident, the following verse was revealed.

Remember you implored the assistance of your Lord, and He answered you:
"I will assist you with a thousand of the angels, ranks on ranks".²⁴

Qutb also quotes a tradition of the Prophet concerning the participation of angels in the battle of Badr:²⁵

Jibril came unto the Prophet and said, "How do you regard the men among yourselves?" The Prophet answered, "As the best of the Muslims (or he used some similar expression)." Jibril said, "And so (do we regard) the angels who assisted at Badr".²⁶

There are a few *hadīths* which describe the way the angels participated on that day:

Ibn ʿAbbās said: on that day a Muslim was chasing a disbeliever and he heard

²³Qutb, *Zilāl*, vol.3, p.1483.

²⁴Qur'ān, 8:9.

²⁵Qutb, *Zilāl*, vol.3, p.1483.

²⁶Al-ʿAsqalānī, *Fath al-Bārī*, vol.7, p.362.

over him the swishing of a whip and the voice of the rider saying: Go ahead, Hayzūm (the name of the angel's horse)! He glanced at the polytheist who was (now) on his back. When he looked at him carefully, he found that there was a scar on his nose and his face was torn as if it had been lashed with a whip, and had turned completely green". An Anṣārī came to the Messenger of God and related this (event) to him. The Prophet replied: "You have told the truth. This was help from the third heaven."²⁷

The Prophet dozed off in the booth. When he woke, he said: "Cheer up, O Abū Bakr, God's help had come to you. Here is Jibrīl, wearing a turban, grasping the reins of his steed, riding in a cloud of dust. God's help and reinforcement have come to you".²⁸

ii) Rain is also regarded by Qutb as one of the means of help (*adāt al-naṣr*) sent by Allah to Muslims. This occurred prior to the confrontation in Badr when the Muslim soldiers marching toward the battle were suffering from thirst, while the polytheists already dominated the water source. In this situation, Satan created doubt in the hearts of the Muslim soldiers about the assistance of Allah. The doubts emerged from the difficulties in performing prayer in a state of impurity, due to the non-existence of water and the fact that *tayammum*²⁹ was not yet legislated, which was later permitted in the Battle of Banū al-Muṣṭaliq in the fifth year of *Hijra*. Thus, Allah sent down torrential rain for the Muslims to drink and clean themselves from the deceit of Satan. It strengthened their hearts and planted their feet firmly. The rain also made the sand firm which enable the Muslim soldiers and animals proceed their

²⁷Muslim, *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*, trans., vol.3, p.961.

²⁸Al-ʿAsqalānī, *Fath al-Bārī*, vol.7, p.364.

²⁹Ceremony of ablution performed with sand instead of water. See Qalʿajī, Dr. Muhammad Rawwās, *Muʿjam Luḡhat al-Fuqahāʾ*, Dār al-Nafāʾis, Beirut, 1988, p.152.

journey more easily. This happened before the implementation of al-Hubāb b. Mundhir's plan to encamp near the water well and make a basin or reservoir full of water, then destroy all the other wells so that they would be deprived of water. According to Qutb, without this help, the Muslim soldiers would have remained in a state of doubt and restlessness and would easily have been defeated.³⁰ This incident is stated in the Qur'ān:

(Remember) when He covered you with a slumber as a security from Him, and He caused rain to descend on you from the sky, to clean you thereby and to remove from you the *rijz* (whispering, evil suggestion, etc.) of Satan, and to strengthen your hearts, and make your feet firm thereby.³¹

iii) Pebbles are also used as a means of help. This occurred in the battle of Badr, as is stated in the Qur'ān: "And you (Muhammad) threw not when you did throw but Allah threw."³² Qutb,³³ following the traditional commentators, mentions how the Prophet took a handful of pebbles, cast it at the enemy and said: "Foul be those faces!"³⁴

iv) Wind was sent during the siege of Muslims in the Battle of the Trench. Qutb, again following the traditional sources, states that Allah sent as help a wind

³⁰Qutb, *Zilāl*, vol.3, p.1484-1485.

³¹Qur'ān, 8:11.

³²Qur'ān, 8:17.

³³Qutb, *Zilāl*, vol.3, p.1490.

³⁴Ibn Ishaq, *Sira Rasul Allah*, trans., p.455. See also al-Mubarakpuri, *Ar-Raheeq al-Makhtūm*, trans., p.221.

and soldiers which cannot be seen by the Muslim soldiers at that time.³⁵ His view is based on the following verse:

O you who believe! Remember Allah's Favour to you, when there came against you hosts, and We sent against them a wind and forces that you saw not. And Allah is Ever All-Seer of what you do³⁶.

Ibn Ishāq, in describing this occasion, states:

Quraysh and Ghatafān refused to do so, and God sowed distrust between them, and sent a bitter cold wind in the winter nights which upset their cooking-pots and overthrew their tents.³⁷

He further says,

Then Abū Sufyān said: "O Quraysh, we are not in a permanent camp; the horses and camels are dying; the B. Qurayza have broken their word to us and we have heard disquieting reports of them. You can see the violence of the wind which leaves us neither cooking-pots, nor fire, nor tents to count on. Be off, for I am going!"³⁸

v) Tranquillity (*sakīna*): According to Qutb, when tranquillity enters into the heart, it becomes peace, relaxation, confidence, trust, perseverance and obedience. On many occasions Allah assists the Muslims with this reward, as described in the following verse:

He it is Who sent down tranquillity (*sakīna*) into the hearts of the believers, that they may grow more in Faith along with their (present) Faith. And to Allah belong the hosts of the heavens and the earth, and Allah is Ever All-

³⁵*Ibid*, vol.5, p.2836.

³⁶Qur'ān, 33:9.

³⁷Ibn Ishāq, *Sīrat Rasūl Allāh*, trans., p.459-460.

³⁸*Ibid*, p.460.

Qutb argues that tranquillity was given to the Muslims in the Prophet's time during several incidents that occurred between the marching of the Muslims to perform *ʿumra* and the signing of the Hudaibiya treaty which terrified their hearts. The most crucial of these was when the Muslims were threatened by the polytheists on their way to Mecca, while they were not prepared in terms of military equipment, considering that their intention was to perform *ʿumra*. Although the Prophet took the pledge of Ridwān from his Companions, Qutb still believes that the Muslims were worried because their number was only one-thousand and four hundred whereas the polytheists Qutb considers to have had advantages in terms of numbers and strategy. If the fight had taken place, the Muslims were in enemy area which they did not know very well. Qutb also believes the threat to Islam was even greater considering that the enemy was in the surrounding area and might strike at any time.⁴⁰ However, Qutb states that the Prophet was assisted with tranquillity to make a decision in this crucial situation. In terms of degree, tranquillity is better than zeal (*ḥamiyya*) and enthusiasm (*ḥamāsa*).⁴¹

vi) Bravery: According to Qutb, it was Allah's plan in the Battle of Badr that the Prophet saw only a small number of polytheist Meccans soldiers in his dream. Then the Prophet told his Companions about this news, which inevitably aroused their

³⁹Qur'ān, 48:4.

⁴⁰Qutb, *Zilāl*, vol.6 p.3318.

⁴¹*Ibid*, vol.6, p.3318-3319. This kind of assistance also can be seen in the battle of Badr, the Trench and Hunayn.

bravery and determination. Qutb stresses that what the Prophet saw in his dream became a reality on the battlefield. The Muslim soldiers, according to Qutb, saw the enemy as being as few as the enemy saw of them. However, Qutb maintains that the Muslims recognized that they were superior to their enemy in terms of belief, strength and strategy on the battlefield, whereas the enemy underestimated the strength of the Muslim soldiers, even though they were only few in number. Qutb believes that had Allah showed a large contingent of the enemy in the dream of the Prophet, it would certainly have caused doubt and fear in the Muslim ranks.⁴²

Finally, Qutb does not reject the possibility that the means of assistance may also be something different from what has been mentioned above. This can be understood from Qutb's interpretation of the word troops (*jund*) in the Qur'ān which he regards as troops (*jund*) of Allah and such cannot be counted and defeated. Therefore, he refuses to elaborate deeply on the nature, physical shape and even the role of these troops in the army, because he regards this matter as beyond human knowledge. Qutb's view is based on the following Qur'ānic verses: "...And none can know the troops (*junūd*) of your Lord but He".⁴³ Thus, there is no need to discuss and debate about it.⁴⁴

Defeat

It is a fundamental principle of *jihād* that Allah will assist the Muslims as long

⁴²*Ibid*, vol.3, p.1526-1527.

⁴³Qur'ān, 74:31.

⁴⁴Qutb, *Zilāl*, vol.6, p.3759-3760. See also vol.3, p.1617.

as they fulfill certain conditions, which are: their deep belief in Allah; fulfilling the requirements of belief in moral behaviour; and in all aspects of the organisation of the army, that they should have exercised all their efforts and struggles to the limit. But, when one of the conditions as mentioned above are neglected, a desirable outcome cannot be assured. This is because the Muslims are still subject to the ordinary laws of nature which determine the result according to the Muslims' condition.⁴⁵

Furthermore, Qutb maintains that a human being, whether he is a Muslim or not, when he exposes himself to the law of Allah, must realize that the law is applicable to him. In fact, he becomes a perfect Muslim when he puts himself in conformity with the requirements of the law of Allah.⁴⁶ The best example of this is the defeat suffered by the Muslims in the Battle of Uhud. According to Qutb, the defeat at Uhud was caused by the Muslims themselves: they disputed over the affair; did not fulfill conditions laid down by Allah and His Prophet; their hearts were preoccupied with desire; finally, they disobeyed the Prophet's commandment and disregarded his strategies.⁴⁷

Qutb holds that there is no concept of defeat in the Muslim soldier's mind, and Muslims are not entitled to defeat as is demonstrated by the history of the prophets.

⁴⁵*Ibid*, vol.1, p.513.

⁴⁶*Ibid*, vol.1, p.514.

⁴⁷*Ibid*.

This is because defeat, in Qutb's definition, is a defeat of the spirit and determination. Defeat on the battlefield is not a real defeat unless it leaves a sense of exhaustion, extinction and hopelessness in the heart. But, if it raises determination and desire for action, and is tempered with stern regard for the defeat while exposing the nature of belief and war, then it can be seen as a prelude to help. That is why the so-called defeat of the Muslims in the battles of Uḥud and Ḥunayn are regarded by Qutb as a trial.⁴⁸ This is because the setback, in both cases, increased the Muslims' determination, which meant that later they were assisted by Allah in other expeditions.⁴⁹ This is advocated by Qutb on his firm belief of the verse which says: "And never will Allah grant to the non-believers a way (to triumph) over the believers".⁵⁰ That is why he rejects any argument which restricts the help to a particular place or period of time. For example, although the Prophets underwent continuous persecution, they were eventually assisted with the triumph of belief.⁵¹ Therefore, all those setbacks which have occurred to the Muslims from Qutb's point of view, are regarded as training and trials.

Martydom and Paradise

Martydom (*shahāda*), literally means "bearing witness." Legally, it means

⁴⁸*Ibid*, vol.2, p.782-783.

⁴⁹*Ibid*.

⁵⁰*Qur'ān*, 4:141.

⁵¹Qutb, *Zilāl*, vol.5, p.3085.

witnessing the truth of Islam which is brought to human beings. To prove that one truly witnesses, one should demonstrate it by way of *jihād*, even if one's life is threatened. In so doing, one will also prove the truth of Islam in this world which is obligatory upon every individual. It is apparent that for Qutb the root of this word refers to the act of embracing Islam, i.e. witnessing the oneness of Allah and the Messenger of Allah. The proclamation of witnessing is not merely an utterance but is supported by practical actions and a conviction that sovereignty belongs to Allah in this world. The practical part of this witnessing is the performance of *jihād* in order to complete this conviction. Thus, if someone dies in the course of completing this task, he is regarded as a martyr.⁵² For Qutb, the first fundamental principle of martyrdom is that those who are entitled to be regarded as "martyrs" should perform *jihād* in the way of Allah with the sole intention of upholding Islam, without any other worldly interests or aims.⁵³

It is clearly stated in the Qur'ān that the one who willingly participates in *jihād* is superior to the one who refrains, as indicated by the following verse:

Not equal are those believers who sit (at home) and receive no hurt, and those who strive and fight in the cause of Allah with their goods and their persons. Allah hath granted a grade higher to those who strive and fight with their goods and persons than those who sit (at home). Unto all (in faith) hath Allah promised good: but those who strive and fight hath He distinguished above those who sit (at home) by a special reward, - ranks specially bestowed by Him, and Forgiveness and Mercy. For Allah is Oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful.⁵⁴

⁵²*Ibid*, vol.1, p.481-482.

⁵³*Ibid*, vol.2, p.707.

⁵⁴Qur'ān, 4:95.

Therefore, the reward is even greater for those who participate in *jihād* and are killed in its course. Qutb's studies on the verses related to martyrdom lead him to conclude that martyrs are superior in many ways in the sight of Allah: they are people exclusively chosen by Allah among the *mujāhidīn*. This is because to be chosen as a martyr means that one will be guaranteed the reward of Paradise. Death in His way is an honour bestowed on them by Allah.⁵⁵ Qutb's view is based on the Qur'ānic verse which says, "...that He may take martyrs from among you...".⁵⁶

Another important aspect of *jihād* is the reward promised to one who is killed while struggling for the sake of Allah. According to the Qur'ān;

Think not of those who are killed in the way of Allah as dead. Nay, they are alive, with their Lord, and they have provision. They rejoice in what Allah has bestowed upon them of His Bounty, rejoicing for the sake of those who have not yet joined them but are left behind: that there shall come upon them no fear neither shall they grieve.⁵⁷

As with the majority of Muslim scholars, Qutb reiterates that the Qur'ān clearly declares that those who die while in the performance of *jihād* are said not to be dead at all, though they are of course human. They live on in a form of which Qutb denies any knowledge, except what has been reported in the authentic traditions of the Prophet. What is certain to Qutb is that they receive sustenance (*rizq*) from Allah and live in a different form from other human beings.

⁵⁵Qutb, *Zilāl*, vol.1, p.481.

⁵⁶Qur'ān, 3:140.

⁵⁷Qur'ān, 3:169-170.

Qutb states that the Qur'ānic view regarding martyrdom clearly contradicts the usual perception about fighting and death. Qutb insists that the verse aims to change people's understanding of life and death. Furthermore, it gives an understanding of how to deal with the issue in a real sense, far from the usual practice of looking at it superficially and from outside. In other words, those who are killed while carrying out the duty of *jihād* have merely had their lives taken away from the sight of people, while they themselves remain alive. The reason for this to Qutb, is because life is characterized by activity (*al-fā'iliyya*), productivity (*al-numū*) and continuity (*al-imtidād*), while death is characterized by negativity (*salbiyya*), extinction (*khumūd*) and cessation (*inqitā'c*). Thus, based on this, Qutb regards those killed in the way of Allah as being alive, in the sense that they are effective in their action to help the truth, in that their ideas and concepts lead to their struggle expanding and substantially affect those they have left behind. They become an influence and effective factor in channelling people's lives.⁵⁸ Elsewhere, he states that the effectiveness and influence of the *shahīd* on people are an important part of the nature of life.⁵⁹

Furthermore, Qutb argues, again following traditional sources, martyrs need not be buried with major ritual ablutions as is the case with other dead bodies, but with the clothes which they were wearing during their life in this world. This is significant in showing that they are in some respects still alive, because major ablution

⁵⁸Qutb, *Zilāl*, vol.1, p.143. See also vol.1, p.518.

⁵⁹*Ibid*, vol.1, p.518.

and wrapping the body is only performed for dead bodies. They also remain alive to their relatives and families, in that their death is not a serious matter to them, since they know a great reward will be conferred on them.⁶⁰

Qutb mentions many traditions of the Prophet which have been reported concerning the reward conferred on martyrs. For example:

Anas ibn Mālik narrated: The Prophet said, "Nobody who enters Paradise likes to go back to the world even if he has got everything on the earth, except a *mujāhid*, who wishes to return to the world so that he may be martyred ten times because of the dignity he receives."⁶¹

Ahmad ibn Hanbal narrated: A martyr is given six things at the first spill of his blood: All his bad deeds are quashed, he will see his place in Paradise, he will marry women with lovely eyes, he will be protected from the torment of Hereafter and the graveyard, and he will feel the sweetness of belief.⁶²

Qutb believes that one of the methods of the Qur'ān which has been essential in prompting many to make the decision to participate in *jihād*, is the teaching of the virtues of turning the hearts and eyes towards Paradise. The following verse makes the promise that "To him who fights in the cause of Allah, - whether he is slain or gets victory - soon shall We give him a great reward."⁶³ Throughout Islamic history, this concept has provided Islam with willing soldiers who have neither hesitated to proceed

⁶⁰*Ibid*, vol.1, p.144.

⁶¹Al-Bukhārī, *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, trans., vol.4, p.55.

⁶²Wensinck, A.J., *Concordance et Indices de la Tradition Musulmane*, vol.2, Cagri Yayinlari, Istanbul, 1988, p.35.

⁶³Qur'ān, 3:195.

for the cause nor retreat from the fight.⁶⁴

In *Milestones*, Qutb states his belief that a similar approach was taken by the Prophet. He mentions that when the Prophet saw the intensity of tortures heaped upon ʿAmmār, his father and his mother - may God pleased with them - he said nothing more than: "Patience, family of Yasir! Paradise is promised for you".⁶⁵

Also, after returning from the battle of Uhud, the Prophet said to the daughter of ʿAbd Allah ibn ʿAmr, the father of Jābir, "Why do you weep? The angels provide him shade with their wings until he would be lifted (to his heavenly abode)."⁶⁶

Zayd said: I was sent by the Prophet at the day of Uhud to look for Saʿd ibn Rabīʿ. He said, "I went through the killed ones. Then I reached him while he was in the final stage of his life, he was suffering of seventy-one wounds on his body, and they were by sword and lance. Then I said to him, "O Saʿd! The Prophet of Allah is sending his regards to you" and he said: "Tell me about your condition?" Then Saʿd said: "Peace be upon the Prophet of Allah. Tell him that I am finding the smell of Paradise and tell my people of Anṣār that they have no excuse in front of Allah and to be sincere to the Prophet of Allah if anyone of you is still alive. Then he died."⁶⁷

⁶⁴Qutb, *Zilāl*, vol.2, p.707-708.

⁶⁵Qutb, *Milestones*, p.296.

⁶⁶Al-Bukhārī, *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, trans. vol.4, p.280.

⁶⁷Qutb, *Zilāl*, vol.1, p.465.

E. Offensive and defensive *jihād*

The issue whether *jihād* is only defensive or offensive has been discussed in detail by Muslim jurists. The problem mainly lies in the different interpretation of the verses of *jihād* and *hadīths* of the Prophet adopted by these jurists. Thus, many arguments have been put forward to support each opinion. It seems that Qutb himself was compelled to tackle this issue due to the widespread misunderstanding about this concept. Thus, he regards the Muslims who hold that *jihād* in Islam is only defensive as distorting the real meaning of *jihād*. He calls them "defeatist" in the sense that they are deceived and embarrassed by the attacks of some orientalist¹ on the origin of *jihād*.² Although he supports the notion that *jihād* is defensive as well as offensive, some of his arguments differ from other Muslim scholars who hold a similar opinion. Before we discuss Qutb's opinion, we shall highlight some arguments which have been put forward by Muslim jurists concerning this issue.

Offensive *Jihād*

There are verses about *jihād* in the Qur'ān, especially in *Sūrat al-Tawba*, the

¹Not all orientalist hold that jihad in Islam is only defensive. Lewis for instance, states " According to Muslim teaching, *jihād* is one of the basic commandments of the faith.....In an offensive war, it is an obligation of the Muslim community as a whole (*fard kifāya*); in a defensive war, it becomes a personal obligation of every adult male Muslim (*fard 'ain*)...The basis of the obligation of jihad is the universality of the Muslim revelation. God's word and God's message are for all mankind; it is the duty of those who have accepted them to strive unceasingly to convert or at least to subjugate those who have not. This obligation is without limit of time or space. It must continue until the whole world has either accepted the Islamic faith or submitted to the power of the Islamic state". See Lewis, Bernard, *The Political Language of Islam*, The University of Chicago Press, Chicago and London, 1988, p.73

²Qutb, *Zilāl*, vol.3, p.1443.

last *sūra* concerning *jihād*, which clearly indicate that *jihād* can be either offensive or defensive.

Fight those who believe not in God nor the Last Day, nor hold Forbidden that which hath been forbidden by God and His Apostle, nor acknowledge the Religion of Truth (even if they are) of the People of the Book, until they pay the *jizya*, with willing submission, and feel themselves subdued.³

O Prophet! strive hard against the Unbelievers and the Hypocrites, and be firm against them. Their abode is Hell, -An evil refuge indeed.⁴

O ye who believe! Fight the Unbelievers who gird you about, And let them find firmness in you: and know that God is with those who fear Him.⁵

All the above verses appear to be a general statement of commandment which results in a general implication that *jihād* is fighting against the infidels whether in an offensive or defensive manner. There are several verses of the Qur'ān which some regard as a qualifying (*takhṣiṣ*) of the verses in the *Sūrat al-Tawba* mentioned before, for example;

But if the enemy incline towards peace, Do thou(also) incline towards peace and trust in God: for He is the One that heareth and knoweth(All things).⁶

Fight in the cause of God those who fight you, but do not transgress the limits; for God loveth not transgressors.⁷

To those against whom war is made, permission is given(to fight), because they are wronged; and verily, God is Most Powerful for their aid.⁸

³Qur'ān, 9:29.

⁴Qur'ān, 9:73.

⁵Qur'ān, 9:123.

⁶Qur'ān, 8:61.

⁷Qur'ān, 2:190

⁸Qur'ān, 22:39.

Dr. Sālih al-Lilhīdān, a contemporary scholar, argues that since qualification means abrogation, that is diverting the rule of the original verse to a new rule, qualifying should come later than the original verse for it to be accepted, whereas in this case all the above verses were clearly revealed before the verses in *Sūrat al-Tawba*. As a result the claim is baseless and cannot be accepted and the statement of the verse should be left as general, since there is no qualification. Even verse 61 of *Sūrat al-Anfāl* which says, "And if they incline to peace, incline thou also to it, and trust in Allah. Lo! He is the Hearer, the Knower," does not confirm that *jihād* should be performed only for defending the Muslims. The verse also clearly does not abrogate the verse of fighting in verse 29 of *Sūrat al-Tawba*. In discussing this issue Dr. Sālih says that the verse of peace and the verse of fighting are dealing with two different matters and neither of them abrogates the other. Each of them applies in different situations.⁹ Even Ibn Kathīr¹⁰ quoted Ibn ʿAbbās and Mujāhid as saying that the verse in *Sūrat al-Anfāl* was abrogated by the verse of the sword (*al-saif*) in *Sūrat al-Tawba* in which God says, "Fight those who believe not in God nor the Last Day".¹¹

Sūrat al-Baqara verse 190, "Fight in the cause of God those who fight you, but do not transgress the limits; for God does not love the transgressors," also does not

⁹Al-Lilhīdān, Dr. Sālih, *al-Jihād fī al-Islām: Baine al-Ṭalab wa-al-Difāʿ*, Dār al-Liwāʾ lil-Nashr wa-al-Tauzīʿ, Riyadh, 1978, p.119.

¹⁰Ibn Kathir, *Tafsīr al-Qurʾān al-ʿAzīm*, vol.2, p.506.

¹¹Qurʾān, 9:29

prove that *jihād* should involve only defensive behaviour. The phrase "who fight you" in fact excluded the one who did not kill women and children. Indeed, the phrase "do not transgress" accordingly, means killing children is part of the transgression. There is nothing whatsoever in this verse which mentions the conduct of *jihād* only in defensive action. Accordingly, verse 39 of *Sūrat al-Hajj* orders the Muslims to fight against the infidels absolutely. The phrase "because they are wronged" does not actually mean that this is the reason (*‘illa*) to wage war against the infidels; rather, it portrays the actual situation in the time of the Prophet when He and His Companions were under much pressure.

Regarding the verse in the Qur’ān which says, "Let there be no compulsion in religion,"¹² Ibn Kathir states that some Muslim scholars view that this verse was abrogated by the sword verse (9:29) which in effect maintains that summoning people to Islam is an obligation. If they refuse to accept it and do not pay *jizya* they are certainly liable to be killed.¹³ Furthermore, al-Ṭabarī states that it is a consensus among the Muslim jurists that Muslims are prohibited to make peace with the unbelievers and the People of the Book when the Muslims are able to fight against them.¹⁴ Al-Zuhaylī¹⁵ also believed that the majority of the Sunnī and Shī‘ī scholars

¹²Qur’ān, 2:256.

¹³Ibn Kathīr, *Tafsīr al-Qur’ān al-‘Azīm*, vol.1, p.465.

¹⁴Al-Ṭabarī, Abū Ja‘far Ibn Jarīr, *Ikhtilāf al-Fuqahā’: Kitāb al-Jihād wa al-Jizyat wa Ahkām al-Muhāribīn*, Leiden, 1933, p.14.

¹⁵*Ibid*, p.93.

in the second century of the *Hijra* considered that the principle in Islam governing international relationships is fighting. This principle is adduced on the basis of the two-tier state; *Dār al-Ḥarb* and *Dār al-Islām*. The existence of a *Dār al-Ḥarb* is ultimately outlawed under the Islamic international law. Thus, the *Dār al-Islām* is under the obligation by which *jihād* is employed, to eliminate the existence of *Dār al-Ḥarb*.

In support of the view that *jihād* can be both offensive and defensive, al-Shaybānī and al-Sarakhsī listed in chronological order the Qur'ānic verses regarding the commandment of *jihād*. Firstly, the Prophet was ordered to deliver the message of Islam and turn away from the infidels.¹⁶ Then he was directed to argue with the infidels in the best and most gracious way.¹⁷ After that, the Muslims were permitted to fight against the infidels to defend themselves.¹⁸ Then, they were commanded to fight the infidels except in the forbidden months.¹⁹ Finally, the Muslims were commanded to fight the infidels absolutely (*muṭlaqan*).²⁰ This commandment holds firm as it was an absolute order which requires obedience (*wamuṭlaq al-'amr yaqtaḍī*

¹⁶Qur'ān, 15:94.

¹⁷Qur'ān, 16:125.

¹⁸Qur'ān, 22:39.

¹⁹Qur'ān, 9:5.

²⁰Qur'ān, 2:244.

It has been narrated from Sulayman b. Burayda through his father that when the Messenger of God appointed anyone as leader of an army or detachment he would especially exhort him to fear God and to be good to the Muslims who were with him. He would say: Fight in the name of God and in the way of God. Fight against those who do not believe in God..... When you meet your enemies who are polytheists, invite them to three courses of action. If they respond to any one of those, you also accept it and withhold yourself from doing them any harm. Invite them to accept Islam; if they respond to you, accept it from them and desist from fighting against them..... If they refuse to accept *Islam*, demand from them the *jizya*. If they agree to pay, accept it from them and hold off your hands. If they refuse to pay the tax, seek God's help and fight them.²²

It is narrated on the authority of Abū Hurayra that the Messenger of God said: I have been commanded to fight against people so long as they do not declare that there is no god but Allah. He who professes it is guaranteed the protection of his property and life on my behalf except for what is due, and his affair rests with God.²³

It is narrated on the authority of Abū Mālik: I heard the Messenger of God say: He who professed that there is no god but Allah and made a denial of everything which the people worship besides God, his property and blood became inviolable, and his affair rests with God.²⁴

All the traditions of the Prophet above as well as the previous Qur'ānic verses undoubtedly show that *jihād* does not necessarily mean that Muslims should use it only to defend themselves from the attack of an enemy, but Muslims may also be

²¹ Al-Sarakhsī, *Sharḥ al-Sīyar al-Kabīr*, vol.1, Maṭba'at Miṣr Sharika Musāhama Miṣriyya, 1957, p.188. Qalyūbī wa 'Umayra, *Hāshīyatān*, vol.4, Sharika Maktaba wa Maṭba'a Mustafa al-Bābī, 1956, Al-Bājūrī, *Hāshiyat al-Bājūrī*, vol.2, p.261.

²² Muslim, *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*, trans., vol.3, p.943.

²³ *Ibid*, vol.1, p.16-17.

²⁴ *Ibid*.

required to wage war initially. Dr.Ṣālih has pointed out that this can also be established from the practice of the Prophet, for example, at the Battle of Badr, when it was the Prophet's intention to capture the goods of the caravan which belonged to the Quraysh.²⁵ He insists that the raid was with the aim of fighting and there is no sign whatsoever that this was to be a defensive action of the Prophet. With regard to this battle the Qur'ān gives us the following picture,

Behold! God promised you one of the two (enemy) parties, that it should be yours: Ye wished that the one unarmed should be yours, but God willed to justify the truth according to His words, and to cut off the roots of the Unbelievers.²⁶

The word "two parties" in the verse was interpreted as a caravan (*al-ḥir*) led by Abū Ṣufyan and a group of the army (*al-naḥīr*) of the Quraish.²⁷ This indicates that the raid was planned for the purpose of fighting which undoubtedly means an offensive tactic. Similar action was also taken by the Prophet in the battles of Khaibar, Ḥunayn and Tabūk.

Those who claim that *jihād* is offensive in manner argue that there is consensus among the Companions that the conquering of other states clearly shows that *jihād* was used in an offensive manner. Furthermore, the conquering of the state

²⁵Al-Lihīdān, , p.119

²⁶Qur'ān, 8:7.

²⁷Al-Ṭabarī, *Tafsīr al-Ṭabarī*, vol.6, p.186.

must begin with fighting.²⁸ Dr. Ṣāliḥ thus concludes that all the claims that the above verses have been restricted (*taqyīd*) or qualified (*takhsīs*) or abrogated clearly depend on groundless evidence.²⁹

Defensive *jihād*

This view was established at first by Sufyān al-Thaurī.³⁰ He asserts that fighting against the unbelievers is not an obligation but if they initiate it, fighting them becomes an absolute obligation upon the Muslims, as the Qur'ān mentions,

Therein and fight the Pagans all together as they fight you all together.³¹

According to al-Ṭabarī, the basic principle of the relationship between Muslims and non-Muslims is peace, and he claims that fighting (*ḥarb*) is not to be desired or sought after. This indicates that *jihād* cannot be used as a means to enlarge the territory of Islam or as a means to proselytize or to accumulate wealth. For the Muslims, legitimate *jihād* is an instrument applied only to defend from evils and aggression (*li daf al-shār wa al-ʿudwān*) and also to protect those engaged in the mission of *daʿwa*.³² He also insists that the purpose of *jihād* is not to extend the

²⁸*Ibid*, p.122.

²⁹Al-Lilhīdān, p.106.

³⁰Al-Sarakhsī, *Sharḥ al-Siyar al-Kabīr*, vol.1, p.187.

³¹Qur'ān, 9:36.

³²Al-Ṭabarī, *Tafsīr al-Ṭabarī*, vol.12, p.63. See also al-Zuhaylī, *al-ʿAlāqāt al-Dauliyya fī al-Islām*, p.94.

territory of Islam. Nor, because of the difference of religion, can Muslims manipulate *jihād* to legitimize their action. In fact, *da'wa* in Islam should be carried out by arguments and evidence and not with sword and spearhead, because Islam inclines towards a permanent peace and not a dreadful war.³³ To justify the argument several verses of the Qur'ān , traditions of the Prophet and the opinion of the jurists are discussed as follows:-

i)the Qur'ānic verses

With regard to this matter, there are several verses in the Qur'ān which state that *jihād* can be proclaimed only on the basis of defending the interests and benefits of Islam and the Muslims. The Qur'ān says:

Fight the Pagans all together as they fight you all together.³⁴

Ibn al-Hammām³⁵ interpreted this verse as a commandment from God to fight the infidels in retaliation for injustice and oppression inflicted on the Muslims. This means that *jihād* is permitted only with legitimate reasons and *jihād* cannot be employed merely because of differences of religion. In another verse the Qur'ān says:

And fight them until there is no persecution and there prevail justice and faith

³³Al-Zuhaylī, *al-ʿAlāqāt al-Dauliyya fī al-Islām*, p.94.

³⁴Qur'ān, 9:36.

³⁵Ibn Hammām, *Sharḥ Faṭḥ al-Qadīr*, vol.5, p.421.

in God.³⁶

Of this verse, Ibn Hammām said that the fighting is permissible until there is no persecution inflicted upon the Muslims which he perceived as persecution by the infidels of the Muslims in several ways such as transgression and causing of injuries; Muslims cannot wage war against them merely because of their belief.³⁷

Al-Zuhaylī maintains that several verses of the Qur'ān show that peace (*al-silm*) is a basic principle of the relationship between Muslims and non-Muslims until there is an attack from the non-Muslims. At this point, war or *jihād* becomes an absolute necessity (*darūra*) for every Muslim on the grounds of self-defence and the right to live. In addition, any preparation against any possibility of being attacked is also a type of legitimate defence.³⁸ The Qur'ān states:

But if the enemy incline towards peace, do thou (also) incline towards peace, and trust in God.³⁹

The Qur'ān also clearly declares that the principle of peace and security is paramount and that it is an obligation for the Muslims to observe it when dealing with the non-Muslims. The Qur'ān said:

³⁶Qur'ān, 2:193.

³⁷Ibn Humām, *Sharḥ Faṭḥ al-Qadīr*, vol.5, p.421.

³⁸Al-Zuhaylī, *al-'Alāqāt al-Dawliyya fī al-Islām*, p.94.

³⁹Qur'ān, 8:61. This verse according to Qatāda and 'Ikrima was abrogated by the Q.9:5, al-Qurṭubī, Abū 'Abd Allah Muḥammad ibn Aḥmad al-Anṣarī, *al-Jāmi' li-Aḥkām al-Qur'ān*, vol.8, Dār al-Kutub al-'Ilmiyya, Beirut, 1988, p.27. See also Sallam, Abū 'Ubaid al-Qāsim, *Kitāb al-Nāsikh wa-l-Mansūkh*, ed. by John Burton, St.Andrews, 1987, p.69.

Allah does not forbid you to deal justly and kindly with those who fought not against you on account of religion and did not drive you out from your homes. Verily, Allah loves those who deal with equity.⁴⁰

Except those who seek refuge with a people between whom and you there is a covenant, or (those who) come unto you because their hearts forbid them to make war on you or make war on their own folk.⁴¹

All the verses of war (*qitāl*) which require the application of *jihād* should, according to al-Zuhaylī,⁴² be studied deeply without omitting even a single verse of them. Accordingly, the requirement of *jihād* or *qitāl* should be backed at least by one of the following reasons:-

a) to defend from any aggression or evil (*dafʿ al-zulm*), based on the Qurʾān:

Sanction is given unto those who fight because they have been wronged.⁴³

b) or to eliminate persecution and protect the spread of *daʿwa*, as the Qurʾān states,

And fight them until persecution is no more, and religion is for God. But if they desist, then let there be no hostility except against wrongdoers.⁴⁴

In fact, the general verses which command the Muslims to launch an attack

⁴⁰Qurʾān, 60:8. This refers to the Muslims who did not migrate (*Hijra*). Some say it refers to the infidels of Mecca but later on was abrogated by the verse which commanded the Muslims to fight them, see al-Tabarī, *Tafsīr al-Tabarī*, vol.12, p.62.

⁴¹Qurʾān, 4:90.

⁴²Al-Zuhaylī, *al-ʿAlāqāt al-Daʿwiyya fī al-Islām*, p.95.

⁴³Qurʾān, 22:39.

⁴⁴Qurʾān, 2:194.

against the unbelievers, such as "Slay them whenever you find them,"⁴⁵ should be read together with the verses which restrict the permission to fight only when there is enmity (*‘udwān*) or aggression, such as Fight in the way of God against those who fight you, but begin no hostilities. Lo! God loveth not aggression."⁴⁶ God in these verses legitimizes the use of violence by Muslims towards the unbelievers in order to defend themselves from aggression and to remove any detrimental effect, so that the activity of *da‘wa* is not threatened and the religion is only for God. Al-Zuhaylī⁴⁷ asserts that the principle of jurisprudence in this matter is that the unconditional (*mutlaq*) should be understood in the light of the qualified (*muqayyad*). This means that the unconditional verses which suggest *jihād* whether due to aggression or not are qualified by the verses which state that fighting is only against those who wage war against the Muslims. Finally, he insists that all the verses related to the commandment of accepting peace are legally valid (*muhkama*) and have not been abrogated, and furthermore, that the verses of peace and pardon are for situations when there is no enmity and opposition between Muslims and non-Muslims.

It is worthwhile also mentioning several verses of the Qur’ān which were cited by the jurists who hold that view that *jihād* can be defensive or offensive. This is because there are totally different interpretations of the same verses used by the jurists

⁴⁵Qur’ān, 2:191.

⁴⁶Qur’ān, 2:190

⁴⁷Al-Zuhaylī, *al-‘Alāqāt al-Dauliyya fī al-Islām*, p.96.

who claim that *jihād* is permitted only for defensive purposes. The verses are as follows:

But if the enemy incline towards peace, do thou (also) incline towards peace, and trust in God.⁴⁸

O ye who believe! When you go abroad in the cause of God, investigate carefully, and say not to anyone who offers you salutation (*al-salam*), "Thou are not a believer".⁴⁹

In rejecting the argument put forward by the former, the latter hold that *al-silm*, in all the above verses means reconciliation or peace. The word can certainly be taken to mean this in all of these verses.⁵⁰ Q. 8:60 - "Make ready for them all thou canst of (armed) force and horses tethered, that thereby ye may dismay the enemy of God and your enemy, and others besides them whom ye know not. God knoweth them. Whatsoever ye spend in the way of God it will be repaid to you in full, and ye will not be wronged"⁵¹ - does not mean that the Muslims can launch an attack whenever they like, but rather it indicates an awareness in terms of preparation by the Muslims in facing any possibility of being attacked. At the same time, it also provides a means of intimidating and frightening an enemy who are probably planning to attack the Muslims.⁵²

⁴⁸Qur'ān, 8:61.

⁴⁹Qur'ān, 4:94.

⁵⁰Al-Ridā, Rashīd, *Tafsīr al-Manār*, vol.10, Maṭba'at al-Manār, Qāhira, n.d, p.70.

⁵¹Qur'ān, 8:60.

⁵²Al-Zamaksharī, Abū al-Qāsim Jāra Allah Maḥmūd ibn 'Umar ibn Muḥammad, *al-Kashshāf*, vol.2, Dār al-Kutub al-'Ilmiyya, Beirut, 1995, p.225. Ibn Humām, *Sharḥ Faṭḥ al-Qadīr*, vol.5, p.224.

ii) the traditions of the Prophet

The traditions of the Prophet can also be seen to confirm the idea of defensive *jihād*. The two traditions below are clearly carrying that idea:

It has been narrated on the authority of Abū Hurairā that the Messenger of God said: Do not desire an encounter with the enemy; but when you encounter them, be firm.⁵³

O people! Do not wish to face the enemy (in battle) and ask God to save you (from calamities) but if you should face the enemy, then be patient and let it be known to you that Paradise is under the shade of swords.⁵⁴

The two traditions above suggest that *jihād* should not be in an offensive manner. This is because the Prophet himself prohibited the desire to be involved in fighting. In another tradition the Prophet set out the purpose of fighting in the way of truthfulness, justice and calling to Islam:

Whoever is fighting for the purpose of upholding the Words of God, he is in the way of God.⁵⁵

The above tradition clearly underlines the principle of *jihād* in Islam, that it should be carried out with concrete reason. To uphold the Word of God according to al-Zuhaylī, does not mean that *jihād* can be waged as understood by some jurists, i.e. in an offensive manner but it should be for some reason such as defending the spread

⁵³Muslim, *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Muslim*, trans., vol.3, p.945. See also the *ḥadīth* on page 946 in the same volume.

⁵⁴Al-Bukhārī, *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, trans., vol.4, p.112.

⁵⁵Reported by al-Bukhārī, Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal and Ibn Māja.

of *da'wa* or defending Muslims from an attack from an enemy.⁵⁶ Regarding the tradition of the Prophet which says,

It is narrated on the authority of Abū Hurayrā that the Messenger of God said: I have been commanded to fight against people so long as they do not declare that there is no god but Allah, and he who professes it is guaranteed the protection of his property and life on my behalf except for what is due, and his affair rests with God.⁵⁷

The above tradition according to al-Khattābī is restricted to the infidel Arabs⁵⁸.

This means that it may be illegal to wage war against other groups of people, including the People of the Book. This may be explained because the People of the Book are worshipping God.⁵⁹

Despite the opinion that *da'wa* can be spread with the sword as well as the tongue to change the belief of the non-Muslims, it however, does not conform with the way Islam should be spread as explained in the Qur'ān, that is with argument and proof.⁶⁰ Furthermore force and compulsion are not the right way to spread Islam because the basic principles of Islam are faith in the heart and belief of a voluntary and free will in religion.⁶¹

⁵⁶Al-Zuhaylī, *al-ʿAlāqāt al-Dauliyya fī al-Islām*, p.96.

⁵⁷Muslim, *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*, trans. by Abdul Hamid Siddiqi, vol.1, p.16-17.

⁵⁸Al-Nawawī, Muḥyi al-Dīn, *Sharḥ Ṣaḥīḥ al-Muslim*, vol.1, Dār al-Maʿrifa, Beirut, 1996, p.156.

⁵⁹*Ibid.*

⁶⁰Qur'ān, 16 :125.

⁶¹Qur'ān, 2:257.

iii) war in Islam

The Prophet in Medina as well as in Mecca insisted on a peaceful policy in his relationship with the non-Muslims. He still believed in peaceful means of spreading Islam which is the nature of *da'wa* and it certainly conforms with the nature of mankind. The war involving the Prophet and his Companions occurred as a result of the intention to put an end to a serious threat from the non-believers at that time⁶². According to al-Zuhaylī, if it had not been for the infringement by the infidels, peace would have continued to prevail.⁶³ As he quotes the statement from 'Alī b. Abī Tālib,

People will not be fought in their own houses unless they have become despicable.

Hence the Prophet waged war against the infidel Meccans because they had become so wicked. It was because they were taking violent action against the Muslims, not just their expulsion of the Emigrants from their homeland.⁶⁴

As regards the Hawāzin tribe, they were fought because they were in a conspiracy with other tribes to attack the Muslims.⁶⁵ For the Jews, they were among the earliest people who signed the treaty with the Prophet in Medina. Banū Qainuqā'

⁶²Al-Zuhaylī, *al-'Alāqa al-Dauliyya fī al-Islām*, p.98.

⁶³*Ibid.*

⁶⁴Ibn Hishām, *Sīrat al-Nabī*, vol.1, p.354.

⁶⁵Ibn Qayyīm al-Jauzī, *Zād al-Ma'ād*, vol.2, p.175.

for example, were initially given protection after helping the Muslims in the battle of Badr. However, they broke their covenant with the Prophet and conspired with ʿAbd Allah ibn Ubayy ibn Salūl, the leader of the hypocrites, to destroy the Muslims. Only after this action, were they expelled from Medina.⁶⁶ Similarly, Banū Naḍīr tried to assassinate the Prophet by dropping a large millstone on his head; they were also expelled from Medina.⁶⁷

The war against Persia and Byzantium was also regarded as legally permitted. This is because the hostile action by the two countries clearly posed a threat to the existence of the Muslims in Medina. The king of Persia, for example, tore up a letter from the Prophet and even asked his allies in Yemen to send two men to kill the Prophet and bring his head to him. The Byzantines also showed their hostility by killing the delegation from the Prophet in Damascus (*Shām*) and they also killed some of the Muslims in neighbouring countries who declared their conversion to Islam.⁶⁸

iv) the opinion of the jurists

The jurists insist that *jihād* is permitted in Islam in order to remove oppression (*dafʿ al-ʿtīdāʿ*) and not because of difference of religion. The Hanafī jurists state:

⁶⁶*Ibid*, p.71.

⁶⁷*Ibid*.

⁶⁸Al-Zuhaylī, *al-ʿAlāqāt al-Dauliyya fī al-Islām*, p.100.

People are initially free from any burden, and the permission to fight is only for the purpose of removing evil.⁶⁹

They also insist that belief is not the reason (*‘illa*) to fight the unbelievers.

According to Malik b.Anas,

[The Muslims] are not permitted to spill blood except with valid reason.⁷⁰

Therefore, the unbelievers who do not inflict any injustice on the Muslims and do not receive any call to Islam, should be left free to practise their own religion. It is not permissible to kill them and to break a peace-tie with them. Indeed, peace between Muslims and them is not because of economic interests nor because of the peace treaty that has been signed, but it is in fact because of the principle of peace which is taught by Islam to make peace prevail continually.⁷¹

In supporting this view, Abū Zahra insists that the principle of relationship between the Muslims and non-Muslims is peace. He argues that the division of the territory into *Dār al-Islām* and *Dār al-Ḥarb* resulted from the contemporary situation and that their decisions could be regarded as a temporary rule (*ḥukm zamanī*) which is unacceptable in terms of principles of religion. He further states that the existence of the division of the world into *Dār al-Islām* and *Dār al-Ḥarb* does not basically detract from peace being a principle governing the relationship between Muslims and

⁶⁹*Ibid.*

⁷⁰Al-Ṭabarī, *Ikhtilāf al-Fuqahā'*: *Kitāb al-Jihād wa al-jizya wa Ahkām al-Muhāribīn*, Leiden, 1933, p.195.

⁷¹ Khallāf, ‘Abd al-Wahhāb, *al-Siyāsa al-Shar‘iyya*, Mu’assat al-Risāla, Beirut, 1989, p.86.

non-Muslims.⁷²

It seems that there is an opinion regarding the use of *jihād* in relations between Muslims and non-Muslims, in the sense that the conduct of the Muslims should be observed for the benefit of the public. This conduct is carried out by the authority of the *imam* who will decide whether to make *jihād* offensively or defensively. Ibn al-‘Arabī also mentions the idea when he discusses Q.8:61.⁷³ He states that there are three views on the meaning of the verse:

- a) it was abrogated by Q.9:5
- b) if the unbelievers seek peace, accept it
- c) if they want to convert to Islam, accept it.

The interesting matter to him, is that if the Muslims feel that they can benefit more from signing the peace treaty with the unbelievers they may accept it. They may also reject a peace treaty if they are in a strong enough position to defeat the non-Muslims. This view is also supported by al-Zamakshārī, who comments that Q.8:61 gives an *imām* authorization to decide whether to wage war against the infidels or to accept a peace treaty on the consideration of the benefits to Islam and its followers.⁷⁴

⁷²Abū Zahrah, Muḥammad, *al-Alāqa al-Dauliyya fī al-Islām*, trans into Malay as *Hubungan-hubungan Internasional dalam Islam*, Bulan Bintang, Jakarta, n.d., p. See also Al-Zuhaylī, *Āthār al-Ḥarb fī Fiqh al-Islāmī*, Dār al-Fikr, Damascus, 1992, p.135.

⁷³Ibn ‘Arabī, *Aḥkām al-Qur’ān*, vol.2, Maktabat al-Jumhuriyya al-‘Arabī, Egypt, p.876.

⁷⁴Al-Zamakshari, *al-Kashshāf*, vol.2, p.225.

It is not true, according to him, that *jihād* is an act of continuous fighting.

Sayyid Qutb's opinion

The most important principle which Qutb derives from the verses of the Qur'ān and the tradition of the Prophet in dealing with the issue of offensive and defensive *jihād* is called piecemeal directive (*al-aḥkām al-marḥaliyya*). The doctrine defines "*jihād* as a practical movement which progresses stage by stage, and at every stage it adapts to the practical needs of the situation and prepares the ground for the next one".⁷⁵ This means that Qutb did not adopt the concept of abrogation with regard to the verses of *jihād* as held by some Muslim jurists. Qutb believes that the verses of Qur'ān concerning *jihād* were revealed phase by phase in accordance to the practical needs of the Muslims at that particular time. In order to prove this point, Qutb quotes from Ibn al-Qayyim in *Zād al-Ma'ād*,⁷⁶ who has summed up the stages of *jihād* during the Prophet's time as follows:

The first revelation from God which came to the Prophet was "Read, in the name of thy Lord, Who created."⁷⁷ This was the beginning of the Prophethood....The commandment to preach had not yet come. God revealed "O thou who enwrapped in thy mantle, arise and warn."⁷⁸ Thus, the revelation of "Read or *Iqrā*" was his appointment to Prophethood, while "O thou who enwrapped" was his appointment to Messengership. Later God commanded the

⁷⁵Qutb, *Zilāl*, vol.3, p.1737. See also p.1432, 1603, 1620 1631, 1598, 1586, 1583 and 1564.

⁷⁶Ibn Qayyim al-Jauziyya, Shamsuddīn, *Zād al-Ma'ād fī Hadyi Sayyid al-'Ibād*, vol.1, Dār al-Kitāb al-'Arabī, Beirut, n.d., p.57.

⁷⁷Qur'ān: 96:1.

⁷⁸Qur'ān, 74:1-2.

Prophet to warn his near relatives,⁷⁹ then his people, then the Arabs who were around them, then all of Arabia, and finally the whole world. Thus for thirteen years after the beginning of his Messengership, he called people to God through preaching without fighting or receiving *jizya* and was commanded to restrain himself and to practice patience and forbearance.⁸⁰ Then he was commanded to migrate, and later permission was given to fight.⁸¹ Then he was commanded to fight those who fought him and restrain himself from those who did not make war with him.⁸² Later he was commanded to fight the polytheists until God's religion was fully established.⁸³ After the command for *jihād* came, the non-believers were divided into three categories: one, the people with whom there was peace; two, the people with whom the Muslims were at war; and three, the *Dhimmīs*.....When the chapter entitled '*Barā'a*' was revealed, the details of treatment of these three kinds of non-believers were described. It was also explained that war should be declared against those from among the 'People of the Book' who declare open enmity, until they agree to pay *jizya* or accept Islam.⁸⁴ Concerning the polytheists and the hypocrites, it was commanded in this chapter that *jihād* be declared against them and that they be treated harshly. The Prophet carried on *jihād* against the polytheists by fighting and against the hypocrites by preaching and argument. In the same chapter, it was commanded that the treaties with the polytheists be brought to an end at the period of their expiration. In this respect, the people with whom there were treaties were divided into three categories:.....Thus, after the revelation of the *Sūrat al-Barā'a*, the unbelievers were of three kinds: adversaries in war, people with treaties, and *Dhimmīs*.....Now the people of the whole world were of three kinds: One, the Muslims who believed in him; two, those with whom he had peace; and three, the opponents who kept fighting with him. As far as the hypocrites were concerned, God commanded the Prophet to accept their appearances and leave their intentions to God, and carry on *jihād* against them by argument and persuasion.....So this was the practice of the Prophet concerning his enemies among the unbelievers and the

⁷⁹ Allah says, "And warn your tribe (O Muḥammad) of near kindred". Qur'ān, 26:214.

⁸⁰ Allah says, "Restrain your hands, and establish regular prayers, and pay *zakār*". Qur'ān, 4:77.

⁸¹ The Qur'ān states, "Permission to fight is given to those (the believers) because they have been wronged, and surely, Allah is Able to give them victory....". Qur'ān, 22:39-40.

⁸² "Fight in the cause of God against those who fight you." Qur'ān, 2:190.

⁸³ "And fight against all the polytheists, as they all fight against you". Qur'ān, 9:36.

⁸⁴ "Fight against those among the People of the Book who do not believe in God and the Last Day, who do not forbid what God and His Messenger have forbidden, and who do not consider the true religion as their religion, until they are subdued and pay *jizya*." Qur'ān, 9:29.

hypocrites".⁸⁵

With regard to the above quotation, Qutb concludes that the Muslims were first restrained from fighting; then they were permitted to fight; then they were commanded to fight against aggressors; and finally they were commanded to fight against all the polytheists. After the period of the Prophet only the final stage of the movement of *jihād* is to be followed; the initial or middle stages are not applicable. For this reason, Qutb adduces the following verses to support his argument:⁸⁶

O you who believe! Fight those of the disbelievers who are close to you, and let them find harshness in you, and know that Allah is with those who are the pious.⁸⁷

And fight against all the polytheists, as they all fight against you.⁸⁸

Fight against those among People of the Book who do not believe in God and the Last Day, who do not forbid what God and His Messenger have forbidden, and who do not consider the true religion as their religion, until they are subdued and pay *jizya*.⁸⁹

According to Qutb, every stage of *jihād* provides the resources according to the practical needs of the situation and prepares the ground for the next one. At the early stage of the Prophet Muḥammad's mission in Mecca, the resources of *jihād* were merely preaching and persuasion. At this time *jihād* by the sword was prohibited

⁸⁵Qutb, *Zilāl*, vol.3, p.1431-1432. This quotation is cited from Qutb's book *Milestones*.

⁸⁶*Ibid*, vol.3, p.1737.

⁸⁷Qur'ān, 9:123.

⁸⁸Qur'ān, 9:36.

⁸⁹Qur'ān, 9:29.

because of various reasons: the Prophet still enjoyed the protection of the Banū Hashīm; this was a stage of training and preparing individuals to sustain the trials and tribulations and to obey the commandment of the leader even though it was against their habits and wishes; also, to protect them from the accusation that Islam is a religion of bloodshed; finally, the Muslims at that time were few in number and if fighting had been allowed, this warfare would have resulted in the complete annihilation of the Muslims.⁹⁰ Qutb maintains that similar action was also taken during the early Medinan period. The reason for this was that the Prophet had signed a pact with the Jews of Medina and with the unbelieving Arabs in and around Medina. Since the political power in Medina was in the hands of the Prophet, the Muslims enjoyed a freedom to preach Islam and there was no need for recourse to fighting.⁹¹ At the same time, the Prophet wanted to gather all his efforts to protect the newly-established Muslim community from the Quraysh's threat. In order to contain the threat, the Prophet sent scouting parties in various directions.⁹²

After several years in a mostly defensive position, the Prophet launched his military offensive initially against the Arabs around Medina. After the Conquest of Mecca, the offensive was carried out against the territories which were under the Roman and Persian authorities.⁹³ Qutb believes if this stage is viewed in its proper

⁹⁰Qutb, *Zilāl*, vol.3, p.1436-1439.

⁹¹*Ibid*, vol.3, p.1439.

⁹²*Ibid*.

⁹³*Ibid*, vol.3, p.1736.

perspective, then there is no room to say that the basic aim of *jihād* was defensive in the narrow sense.⁹⁴

According to Qutb, people who advocate the defensive *jihād*, have clearly misunderstood these stages. He states:

They quote Qur'anic verses without taking into account this aspect, nor do they understand the nature of the various stages through which the religion develops, or the relationship of the verses at various occasions within each stage.

By this, according to Qutb, when they speak about *jihād*, they mix up the various stages and draw from the Qur'ānic verses final principles and generalities for which there is no justification. Qutb believes that the reason for this is that they regard every verse of the Qur'ān as if it were the final principle of this religion.⁹⁵

Qutb explains that the command to refrain from fighting during the Meccan period was a temporary stage in a long journey. The same reason was operating during the early days of the *Hijra*. According to Qutb, people should perceive that when Allah restrained the Muslims from *jihād* at the time of Prophet, it was a strategy rather than principle. It was a matter that pertained to the requirements of the movement and not belief.⁹⁶ But after these early stages, Qutb insists that the reason for *jihād* was not

⁹⁴*Ibid*, vol.3, p.1439.

⁹⁵*Ibid*, vol.3, p.1432.

⁹⁶Qutb, *Milestones*, p.139.

only defending Medina but also initiating war. However, he believes that some people regard the defensive *jihād* adopted by the Prophet at those times as a principle of *jihād* which applies to all times. In principle, some verses are related only to particular stages of the development of *jihād*, while there are other verses which in principle determine the finality of *jihād*, which should be adopted.⁹⁷ After the period of the Prophet only the final stage of the movement of *jihād* is to be followed; the initial or middle stages are not applicable.⁹⁸

According to Qutb, another obvious reason for those who claim that the role of *jihād* is defensive, is misunderstanding about the aim and role of *jihād* by the sword which is not merely because of a threat of aggression against Islamic lands or against Muslims residing in them. The reason for *jihād* exists in the nature of its message which is the declaration of the freedom of man from servitude to other men and his own desires and through establishing God's system. In order to achieve this, Muslim authority is sometimes required to employ *jihād* defensively and sometimes offensively depending on the situation.⁹⁹ However, this does not mean forcing others to accept Islam. The verse "There is no compulsion in religion",¹⁰⁰ is very clear in that it prohibits the Muslims to force others to embrace Islam. Qutb contends that this verse cannot be mixed up with other verses which command Muslims to fight. This

⁹⁷Qutb, *Zilāl*, vol.3, p.1432-1433.

⁹⁸*Ibid*, vol.3, p.1436

⁹⁹*Ibid*, vol.3, p.1736.

¹⁰⁰Qur'ān, 2:256.

is because all these verses are not meant to force other people to accept Islam but, rather to annihilate all political and material powers which prevent people from accepting Allah's system,¹⁰¹ the system which guarantees the freedom of man on the earth from every authority except that of God, and the declaration that sovereignty is God's alone. This, in consequence, brings about the implementation of the system of God. Qutb states:

Islam does not force people to accept its belief, but it wants to provide a free environment in which they have the choice of beliefs. What it wants to abolish is those oppressive political systems under which people are prevented from expressing their freedom to choose whatever beliefs they want, and after that it gives them complete freedom to decide whether they accept Islam or not.¹⁰²

Furthermore, Qutb states:

This freedom does not mean that they will [be able to] make their desires their Gods or that they would choose themselves to be slaves of other creatures, or that they would take others as sovereign over them, and not God. The system which rules humanity in the world must have as its foundation the worship of God alone and this is by accepting legislation from Him...Anyone who grasps the nature of this religion, as discussed above understands the imperative of the dynamic movement of Islam by *jihād* - side by side - with the *jihād* through admonition - and would understand that it is not a defensive movement.¹⁰³

Qutb also maintains that this idea is a product of Western thinking of religion which regards it merely as "belief" in the heart which has no relation to the practical affairs of life, and therefore, they conceive of religious war as a war to impose belief

¹⁰¹Qutb, *Zilāl*, vol.3, p.1433.

¹⁰²*Ibid*, vol.3, 1432-1433.

¹⁰³*Ibid*, vol.3, p.1435.

on people's hearts.¹⁰⁴

Qutb also attacks the argument of *jihād* exclusively for defence as a manifestation of nationalism, a secular ideal that is not compatible with Islam. It is the very nature of Islam to take the initiative of freeing human beings throughout the earth from servitude to anyone other than God; it cannot be restricted within any geographical or racial limits, although the enemies of Islam do not take any action against Islam.¹⁰⁵ He states:

Those who say that Islamic *jihād* was merely for the defence of the 'homeland of Islam' diminish the greatness of the Islamic way of life and consider it less important than their 'homeland'. This is not the Islamic point of view. Their view is a creation of the modern age and is completely alien to Islamic consciousness.....The soil of the homeland has in itself no value or weight. From the Islamic point of view, a national land gains value only to the extent that on it the authority of Allah is established and His guidance is followed, so that it becomes a fortress for belief in Allah, a place where the religion of Allah entitles it to be called the "homeland of Islam", and a center of the movement for the total freedom of man.¹⁰⁶

Qutb also rejects the view of the Muslims who hold that the role of *jihād* is defensive, in the sense that *jihād* is restricted to preaching and persuasion whereas recourse physical force or *jihād* by the sword is to be had only when the Muslims are attacked, and insists that this view clearly contradicts the character of *jihād* which is employed to confront the enemy system in every aspect of it including the ideas, beliefs and political authorities behind it. In other words, the meaning of *jihād*

¹⁰⁴*Ibid*, vol.3, p.1443.

¹⁰⁵*Ibid*, vol.3, p.1441.

¹⁰⁶*Ibid*.

includes the physical force which is used to abolish the organisation and authorities of the system that prevents people from reforming their ideas and beliefs.¹⁰⁷

Finally, Qutb addresses those who still insist on saying that Islamic *jihād* is a defensive movement by stating:

If we insist on calling Islamic *jihād* a defensive movement, then we must change the meaning of the word "defence" to "the defense of man" against all those elements which limit his freedom. These elements take the form of beliefs and concepts, as well as of political systems, based on economic, racial, or class distinction.¹⁰⁸

Finally, the Muslim jurists can be divided into four categories with regards to the issue of defensive and offensive *jihād*. First, those who believe in offensive *jihād*. They base their argument on the abrogation of the earlier verses of *jihād* with the verse of the sword. Second, those who restrict the scope of *jihād* to only defensive against a hostile force. Third, those who hand over this matter to the *Imām* to decide for the benefit of the Muslims. The fourth group, those who believe that *jihād* is offensive as well as defensive. They argue as Solihin states,

..... God prescribed *jihād* for a certain cause which was later changed, such as when Muslims were in weak position or few in number they were just admonished to exercise patience. When they became powerful, *jihād* was prescribed for them. According to them, there is no *naskh* (abrogation), rather it is part of an oblivion (*mansa'*) which means that the command of *jihād* was deferred up to a certain stage.¹⁰⁹

¹⁰⁷*Ibid*, vol.3, p.1432.

¹⁰⁸*Ibid*, vol.3, p.1436.

¹⁰⁹Solihin, Sohirin Mohammad, "Studies on Sayyid Qutb's *Fī Zilāl al-Qur'ān*," unpublished Ph.D thesis, University of Birmingham. 1993, p.304.

Therefore, Qutb belongs to the fourth group.¹¹⁰

¹¹⁰This view is also held by Zarkashī, Suyūṭī and al-Muqrī. *Ibid.*

F. *Jihād* against the unbelievers

Before we embark on this matter, it will help to understand Qutb's view on peace and war. Qutb believes that Islam underlines peace as the basic principle while war is resorted to when necessary. Qutb states that "peace means harmony in the universe, the laws of life, and the origin of man, while war is the result of violations of harmony such as injustice, despotism and corruption."¹ War is a measure to ensure peace as the Qur'ān says, "And fight them on until there is no more tumult or oppression, and religion is for Allah".² For that reason, Islam eliminates almost all factors that normally incite war including racialism, economic exploitation and self-interest. In Islam, the aim of war can be simplified as upholding the realm of God on earth and eliminating oppression, extortion, and injustice.³

In his *Fī Zilāl al-Qur'ān: Ru'yat Istishrāqiyya Faransiyya*, Olivier Carre's seems to agree on this point when he states that the whole idea contained in the *Zilāl* is toleration towards every kind of enmity and hostility. He also asserts that Qutb's attitude on the question of interaction between Muslims and non-Muslims is based on the concept of having love for all mankind and not resenting those who hurt one. All the activities of the Muslims are aimed towards establishing a just system based on the principles of peace and justice, and they are not intended to cause harm to an

¹Qutb, *Islam and Universal Peace*, p.9.

² Qur'ān, 2:193.

³Qutb, *Zilāl*, vol.1, p.186-187. See also Qutb, *Islam and Universal Peace*, p.12.

exploited people.⁴ It seems that Qutb's argument coincides with the traditional point of view as Khaddurī mentions that war in Islam is an instrument to achieve the ultimate peace.⁵ The peace which results from the final victory of Islam is in Qutb's words, that "the religion (i.e. the law of society) be purified for God, that the obedience of all people be for God alone, and that some people should not be lords over others".⁶

Jihād against the polytheists

Qutb's view on the relationship between Muslims and the polytheists can be found largely in his interpretation of verses 1-29 of *Sūrat al-Tawba* which are the final verses on *jihād* revealed in Medina. In the first verse of the *sūra* it says,

Freedom from obligation (is proclaimed) from Allah and His Messenger toward those of the idolaters with whom you made a treaty.⁷

According to Qutb the verse commands Muslims to terminate all relationships with the polytheists. This applies to polytheists who had treaties with the Prophet, either, those who had treaties with the Prophet for four months and broke their treaty, or those who had finished their term of treaty with the Prophet. Qutb quoted Ibn

⁴Carre, Olivier, *Fī Zilāl al-Qur'ān*, trans. by Muḥammad Ridā 'Ajjāj, al-Zahrā' li-I'lām al-'Arabī, Cairo, 1993, p.163.

⁵Khadduri, Majid, *The Law of War and Peace in Islam*, Luzac & Co., London, 1940, p.75.

⁶Qutb, *Milestones*, p.114.

⁷Qur'ān, 9:1.

Qayyim in *Zād al-Ma'ād* concerning the treatment of polytheists after the revelation of *Sūrat al-Tawba* where he says,

When the chapter entitled 'barā'a' [*al-Tawba*] was revealed, the details of treatment of these three kinds of non-believers was described. It was also explained that war should be declared against those from among the People of the Book who declare open enmity, until they agree to pay *jizya* or accept Islam. Concerning the polytheists and hypocrites, it was commanded in this chapter that *jihād* be declared against them and that they be treated harshly. The Prophet carried on *jihād* against the polytheists by fighting and against the hypocrites by preaching and argument. In the same chapter, it was commanded that the treaties with the polytheists be brought to an end at the period of their expiration. In this respect, the people with whom there were treaties were divided into three categories: First, those who broke the treaty and did not fulfil its terms. He was ordered to fight against them; he fought against them and was victorious. The second were those with whom the treaty was made for a stated term; they had not broken the treaty nor helped anyone against the Prophet. Regarding them, God ordered that these treaties be completed to their full term. The third kind were those with whom there was neither a treaty nor were they fighting against the Prophet, or those with whom no term of expiration was stated. Concerning these, it was commanded that they be given four month's notice of expiration, at the end of which they should be considered open enemies and fought with....⁸

Quṭb believes that the Muslims' relationship with the polytheists is governed by the principles of piecemeal directives (*ahkām marḥaliyya*). It begins with the commandment to be patient and abstain from taking vengeance on the polytheists. Then, the Muslims were commanded to defend themselves against attack from the polytheists. Lastly, they were commanded to adopt offensive tactics towards the polytheists after the revelation of *Sūrat al-Tauba* in the ninth year of the *Hijra*.⁹ The last principle prevails as the governing principle of *jihād* in Islamic law.¹⁰

⁸Quṭb, *Zilāl*, vol.3, p.1580.

⁹*Ibid*, vol.3, p.1564

¹⁰*Ibid*, vol.3, p.1582 and also p.1580.

Although Qutb believes that the verse in *Sūrat al-Tawba* is the final rule regarding *jihād*, it does not in his opinion abrogate any other verses of *jihād* which were revealed according to circumstances and which he regards as piecemeal directives. This is because every rule concerning *jihād* applied to Muslims is measured according to its place, time and circumstances. However, Qutb insists that this final rule regarding *jihād* should be applied whenever Muslims are able to implement it as it was in the time when *Sūrat al-Tawba* was revealed and at the time of Islamic conquest. The misunderstanding of the whole concept of *jihād* including final rules and piecemeal rules leads to claims that *jihād* is only applicable when Muslim land is under threat, on the assumption that, in the past, the Prophet made the treaty of Ḥudaybiya with the polytheists and even in Medina, he charted the covenant with the people of other faiths. Qutb makes it clear that those actions taken by the Prophet were appropriate to the circumstances at that time. Furthermore, he suggests that the Muslims nowadays who face similar problems should also adopt a similar approach. However, if Muslims are unable to implement the final rule of *jihād*, they are not required to do that. Instead, they should gradually strive until the final rule of *jihād* can be implemented.¹¹

That is why he criticizes Riḍā who holds that *jihād* is employed as a reaction against outside aggression. This aggression according to Riḍā includes the oppression of the Muslims in Mecca. After their emigration to Medina, the Prophet signed a

¹¹*Ibid*, vol.3, p.1581.

treaty in order to uphold the principle of peace and cooperation in dealing with the People of the Book. However, the Muslims were forced to fight against them as a result of their breaking of the agreement. Riḍā also argues that the treaty of Ḥudaybiya is an evidence of the seriousness of Islam in upholding the principle of peace in dealing with the polytheists and spreading Islam among them with proofs and persuasion. But, they still posed a threat to the Muslims until the Conquest of Mecca. Since the polytheists continuously showed their hostility towards the Muslims, the verse of disavowal was revealed to end the relationship with the polytheists except for those who did not break their covenant. Although the aim of the verse was to eradicate the force of the polytheists in the Arabian Peninsula, Riḍā insists that the principle of peace and defensive *jihād* still has to be maintained which is featured in the following verses: "And fight in the way of Allah with those who fight with you, and do not exceed the limits",¹² "And if they incline to peace, then incline to it and trust in Allah".¹³ However, Quṭb holds that Riḍā's views did not take into account the main principle behind the dissolution of all treaties with the polytheists which is contained in the Qur'ān; it is the difference between the system of Islam and the man-made system which cannot co-exist or govern human affairs simultaneously.¹⁴

Similarly, Quṭb refutes the opinion of Muḥammad Darwaza, a writer of *Tafsīr*

¹²Qur'ān, 2:190.

¹³Qur'ān, 8:61.

¹⁴Quṭb, *Zilāl*, vol.3, p.1589.

al-Hadīth, who views that Islam strives for peace, which guarantees peaceful life within its territory. Peace is the aim of Islam, thus, any measures which help to achieve this aim, including a treaty pact, are very much supported. Quṭb also criticizes Darwaza's opinion that the Prophet's termination of the treaty was only applied to the polytheists who broke the covenant, while those who keep their covenant both permanently or temporarily could renew their treaty until they broke it. Even those who broke the pact, according to Darwaza, were open for renewal. Furthermore, the piecemeal rules which only apply to certain periods of time become the main principle which qualifies the generalization of the final verses concerning *jihād*.¹⁵ Darwaza's views are based on the following Qur'ānic verse:

Except those of the idolaters with whom you have an agreement, and who have not failed you in aught, nor have supported any one against you, so fulfil their agreement to the end of their term: surely Allah loves those who are careful (of their duty). So when the sacred months have passed away, then slay the idolaters wherever you find them, and take them captives and besiege them and lie in wait in every ambush, if they repent and keep up prayer and pay *zakāt*, leave their way free to them; surely Allah is Forgiving and Merciful.¹⁶

With regard to the above verses, Darwaza refutes the exegesis of Ibn Kathīr who regards them as the "verses of the sword" against the polytheists which abrogate all verses commanding tolerance and leniency towards them. He insists that this clearly contradicts the final rule which forbids fighting against those who are not the enemy of the Muslims and those who have agreement with the Muslims. Secondly, "Fight those who do not believe in Allah, nor in the Last day, nor prohibit what Allah

¹⁵*Ibid*, vol.3, p.1589.

¹⁶Qur'ān, 9:4-5.

and His Messenger have prohibited, nor follow the religion of truth, out of those who have been given the Book, until they pay *jizya* out of their hand and are utterly subdued," is the "verse of the sword" against the People of the Book. Thirdly, "O Prophet, strive hard against the unbelievers and the hypocrites and be unyielding to them; and their abode is Hell, - and worst indeed is that destination".¹⁷ This verse is the "verse of the sword" against the hypocrites. Fourthly, "If two parties among the believers fall into a quarrel, make peace between them: but if one of them acts wrongfully towards the other, then fight that which acts wrongfully until it returns to Allah's command; then if it returns, make peace between them with justice and act equitably; surely Allah loves those who act equitably",¹⁸ is the "verse of the sword" against the aggressors.

Darwaza also criticizes al-Ṭabarī who states that the Q.9:5 is commanding the Muslims to fight against the polytheists regardless of whether they have a covenant or not. This, according to Darwazah, clearly contradicts the verse, "God does not forbid you, with regard to those who do not fight against your faith, nor drive you out of your homes, to deal kindly and justly with them; for God loves those who are just".¹⁹ He maintains that Q.9:61 exclusively refers to those who broke the covenant. It also does not abrogate the general rules contained in the verses, "There is no compulsion in religion" and "... call to the way of Allah with wisdom and good

¹⁷Qur'ān, 9:73.

¹⁸Qur'ān, 49:9.

¹⁹Qur'ān, 60:9.

counselling".²⁰

Qutb refutes such views on the assumption that Darwaza does not take into account the absolute right of Islam (*haqq al-Islām al-muṭlaq*) which liberates people from worshipping fellow human beings. More than that, Qutb says, it indicates Darwaza's carelessness about the principle of *jihād* in Islam and the dynamic of Islam which removes obstacles of *daʿwa* according to the ability of the Muslims and the circumstances on a particular time. Therefore, he ignores the final rule regarding *jihād* in preference to the rules which were revealed at a particular time. Qutb insists that the verses remain viable for similar cases.²¹

Finally, Qutb concludes that there are two factors which result in the commandment to fight against the polytheists:

i) difference of ideology

The difference of principles between Islam and polytheism in the belief, morals and laws in regulating people's lives make their existence for the same purpose and at the same time impossible.²² For Qutb, Islam provides a complete set of laws and regulations which are in harmony with human beings regardless of religion, race and background. These laws guarantee a peaceful relation between the physical and the

²⁰Qutb, *Zilāl*, vol.3, p.1590.

²¹*Ibid*, vol.3, p.1591-1592.

²²*Ibid*, vol.3, 1594 and 1587.

spiritual within oneself, between human beings, and also with the universe. Its suitability is proven when considering that its source is from one God who created this life. He designed the law which caters for the needs of human beings.²³

Qutb, following the Qur'ān, states that the polytheists' attitude of hostility towards the Muslims was entirely motivated by the difference of ideology and not that of personality²⁴. Qutb shows this by quoting several verses of the Qur'ān:

You take vengeance on us only for as much as we believed the tokens of our Lord when they came unto us.²⁵

And they ill-treated them for no other reason than that they believed in Allah, Exalted in Power, Worthy of all Praise.²⁶

Qutb states that if we look at the biography (*sīra*) of the Prophet it gives us the nature, aim, method and stages of the Islamic movement. From that, Qutb believes that the termination of the relationship between the Muslims and polytheists is due to the contradiction of the two different ways of life and the impossibility of them existing together. Qutb argues that it is not something unexpected or accidental that the polytheists are against the Muslims, but rather because of their difference of aim.²⁷

²³Qutb, *Ma'ālim*, p.111-112. See also Qutb, *Islam and Universal Peace*, p.5-8.

²⁴Qutb, *Zilāl*, vol.3, p.1606.

²⁵Qur'ān, 7:126.

²⁶Qur'ān, 85:8.

²⁷Qutb, *Zilāl*, vol.3, p.1586.

According to Qutb, there were voices of protest made by the weak Muslims when the confrontation against the polytheists was announced. After a series of victories and the domination of Islam in the Arabian Peninsula, some Muslims believed that there was not a real need to fight against the polytheists. This is because only a scattered population of polytheists were left who did not pose any threat to the security of Muslims and they believed that those polytheists would gradually embrace Islam. Furthermore, this declaration of fighting was profoundly difficult to accept considering that they had to fight against their own family and relatives. They also feared that this move would cripple and jeopardize their interest in commerce and business which had been established for ages. This is because the polytheists were prevented from performing Hajj, visiting and doing business in Mecca which was an important centre for business. They were also unprepared to sacrifice their persons and wealth as a result of this pronouncement because their conversion was substantially motivated by worldly interest. Finally, they believed that the polytheists should be dealt with in a gradual and peaceful way.²⁸

ii) hostility towards the Muslims

It is a natural and long-lasting aim of the polytheists to destroy Islam and the Muslims as a result of the differences in principles, especially in belief. Qutb bases his view on the following verse of the Qur'ān:

²⁸*Ibid*, vol.3, p.1594.

How can there be a covenant with Allah and His messenger for the idolaters save those with whom you made a treaty at the Sacred Place? So long as they are true to you, be true to them. Lo! Allah loves those who keep their duty. How (can be there be any treaty for the others) when, if they have the upper hand of you, they regard not pact nor honour in respect of you? They satisfy you with their mouths while their hearts refuse. And most of them are wrong-doers.²⁹

Qutb holds that although the unbelievers had negotiated a peace treaty with the Muslims, their hearts were nevertheless full of treachery. Their intentions were borne out by their deeds for whenever they concluded a treaty it was apparent that they had the intention of breaking it when they gained the upper hand over the Muslims.³⁰ Qutb states that this is a declaration from the Qur'ān concerning the long-lasting aim of the polytheists notwithstanding place and time.³¹ According to Qutb, this can be seen clearly in their long history of hostility towards the Prophet Muḥammad. This, for Qutb, is only a continuation of their animosity which had befallen previous prophets including Noah, Hūd, Ṣāliḥ, Abraham, Moses and Jesus. It also continued after that, when the polytheist Mongols invaded Baghdad which was regarded as the darkest day in Islamic history. Qutb quotes Ibn Kathīr who states that when the Mongols entered into Baghdad they killed men, women and children.³²

Qutb further claims that the fate of the Muslims in modern society is also not

²⁹Qur'ān, 9:7-8.

³⁰Qutb, *Zilāl*, vol.3 ,p.1605.

³¹*Ibid*, vol.3, p.1593.

³²*Ibid*, vol.3, p.1608.

much different when compared to the medieval one. After the establishment of Pakistan, Qutb claims that out of eight million Muslims who attempted to emigrate to Pakistan, nearly five million were killed by the Hindus. It seems that Qutb also includes the communists among the polytheists where he claims that the Muslims were persecuted under their regimes in China, Russia and Yugoslavia.³³

Their aim was also to see the Muslims abandon their religion and follow in the footsteps of their forefathers. Qutb justifies his position by quoting a verse of the Qur'ān:³⁴ "....Nor will they cease fighting you until they turn you back from your faith if they can..³⁵ According to Qutb, unless one understands both factors, one will not understand the nature of *jihād* in Islam and the long-standing confrontation between Muslims and polytheists; nor will one understand the secret behind the courage and tenacity of the first generation of *mujāhidīn*, the secret of the Islamic conquests and the secret of the Crusades and the war with idolaters which have continued for over fourteen centuries.³⁶

Jihād against the People of the Book

The treatment of the People of the Book, according to Qutb, is similar to that

³³*Ibid*, vol.3, p.1608-1610.

³⁴*Ibid*, vol.3, p.1593.

³⁵Qur'ān, 2:217.

³⁶Qutb, *Zilāl*, vol.3, p.1593.

of the polytheists based on verse 29 of the *Sūrat al-Tawba* which says:

Fight those who do not believe in Allah, nor in the Last Day, nor prohibit what Allah and His Apostle have prohibited, nor follow the religion of truth from those who have been given the Book, until they pay *jizya* out of their hand and are utterly subdued.

Qutb, in referring to the above verse, holds the view that after the revelation of this verse, the relationship should be governed by the principle of offering *jizya* to the Muslim authority. In other words, it is prohibited to sign any peace treaty unless the non-Muslims pay the *jizya* which results in the prohibition of fighting against them. As in the case of the polytheists, Qutb maintains that the piecemeal doctrine is also applied to all the People of the Book regardless of time and place.³⁷ It seems that Qutb insists on this concept because of the misunderstanding of some people, who he claims deduce the final rule concerning *jihād* from verses which were revealed at a particular period of time. For Qutb, verse 29 of *Sūrat al-Tawba* is a final rule regarding *jihād* against the People of the Book. However, if the Muslims are not able to deal with them as required, they are subject to the rule designed for that particular situation as practised by the Prophet at a different time. In order to determine the rule to which the Muslims are subject, they are allowed to use *ijtihad*.³⁸

According to Qutb, the piecemeal doctrines in dealing with People of the Book can be seen clearly in the following verses of the Qur'ān:

And do not dispute with the followers of the Book except by what is best,

³⁷*Ibid*, vol.3, p.1620.

³⁸*Ibid*, vol.3, p.1624.

except those of them who act unjustly, and say: We believe in that which has been revealed to us and revealed to you, and our God and your God is one, and to Him do we submit.³⁹

Say: We believe in Allah and that which has been revealed to us, and that which was revealed to Abraham and Ishmael and Isaac and Jacob and the tribes, and that which has been given to Moses and Jesus, and that which was given to the prophets from their Lord; we do not make any distinction between any of them, and to Him do we submit. If they then believe as you believe in Him, they are indeed on the right course. But if they turn back, then they are only in great opposition, so Allah will suffice you against them, and He is the Hearing, the Knowing.⁴⁰

Say: O People of the Book! come to an agreement between us and you: that we shall worship none but Allah, and that we shall ascribe no partner unto Him, and that none of us shall take others for lords beside Allah. And if they turn away, then say: Bear witness that we are they who have surrendered.⁴¹

Many of the people of the Book wish that they could turn you back into unbelievers after your faith, out of envy from themselves, after the truth has become manifest to them. Forgive and be indulgent (toward them) until Allah brings about His command. Surely Allah has power over all things.⁴²

This principle continued to be observed by the Prophet in accordance with the method of practical movement which progressed stage by stage until the commandment of fighting was revealed.⁴³

Quṭb holds that in the beginning of Islam, the Qur'ān says that the population

³⁹Qur'ān, 29:46.

⁴⁰Qur'ān, 2:136-1137.

⁴¹Qur'ān, 3:64.

⁴²Qur'ān, 2:109.

⁴³Quṭb, *Zilāl*, vol.3, p.1625.

of the People of the Book in Mecca was very small and that they later on embraced Islam. His opinion is based on the following verses:

(As to) those whom We gave the Book before it, they are believers in it. And when it is recited to them they say: We believe in it; surely we were submitted before this.⁴⁴

Say: Believe in it or believe not; surely those who were given knowledge beforehand fall down on their faces, making obeisance when it is recited to them. And they say: Glory be to our Lord! surely the promise of our Lord was to be fulfilled.⁴⁵

Say: Have you considered if it is from Allah, and you disbelieve in it, and a witness from among the children of Israel has borne witness of one like him, so he believed, while you are big with pride: surely Allah does not guide the unjust people.⁴⁶

And thus have We revealed the Book to you. So those whom We have given the Book believe in it, and of these (also)⁴⁷ there are those who believe in it, and none deny Our revelations except the unbelievers⁴⁸.

Qutb maintains that a few individuals whom he refers to as People of the Book, also followed their fellow religionists' footsteps in Mecca by converting to Islam.⁴⁹ According to Qutb, this situation is referred to in the following Medinan verses:

And most surely of the People of the Book there are those who believe in

⁴⁴Qur'ān, 28:52-53.

⁴⁵Qur'ān, 17:107-109.

⁴⁶Qur'ān, 46:10.

⁴⁷According to Pickthall, the verse refers to the people of Mecca. See Pickthall, Mohammed Marmaduke, *The Meaning of Glorious Qur'ān*, n.d., p.287.

⁴⁸Qur'ān, 29:47. See also Qur'ān, 6:114, 13:36.

⁴⁹Qutb, *Zilāl*, vol.3, p.1624.

Allah and that which has been revealed to you and that which was revealed to them, humbling themselves before Allah. They do not purchase a trifling gain at the price of the revelations of Allah. Verily their reward is with their Lord, and lo! Allah is swift to take account.⁵⁰

Among the People of the Book is he who, if entrusted with a weight of treasure, will return it to you. And among them there is he who, if you trust him with a piece of gold, will not return it to you unless you keep standing over him. That is because they say: "We have no duty to the Gentiles." They speak a lie concerning Allah knowingly.⁵¹

Certainly you will find the most violent of people in enmity for those who believe (to be) the Jews and those who are polytheists, and you will certainly find the nearest in friendship to those who believe (to be) those who say: We are Christians. This is because there are priests and monks among them and because they do not behave proudly. And when they hear what has been revealed to the apostle, you will see their eyes overflowing with tears on account of the truth that they recognize, they say: Our Lord! We believe, so write us down with the witnesses (of truth). And what (reason) have we that we should not believe in Allah and in the truth that has come to us, while we earnestly desire that our Lord should cause us to enter with the good people? Therefore Allah rewarded them on account of what they said - gardens underneath which rivers flow, wherein they will abide forever; and this is the reward of those who do good (to others).⁵²

With respect to the People of the Book in the Arabian Peninsula, Qutb insists that the majority of them remained in their religion and even showed their hostility towards the Muslims, especially the Jews. They also refuted, as Qutb mentions, the news of the coming of the Prophet Muḥammad and the truth of the Qur'ān. Thus, this situation can be seen to be highlighted in many Medinan as well as Meccan verses. Among the Meccan verses are:

⁵⁰Qur'ān, 3:199.

⁵¹Qur'ān, 3:75.

⁵²Qur'ān, 5:82-85.

And when Jesus came with clear arguments, he said: I have come to you indeed with wisdom, and that I may make clear to you part of what you differ in ; so be careful of (your duty to) Allah and obey me: Surely Allah is my Lord and your Lord, therefore worship Him; this is the right path. But parties from among them differed, so woe to those who were unjust because of the chastisement of a painful day.⁵³

And they were not divided until after the knowledge had come to them out of envy among themselves; and had it not been a Word that had already gone forth from your Lord for an appointed term, it surely had been judged between them. And those who were made to inherit the Scripture after them are verily in hopeless doubt concerning it.⁵⁴

The contents of the Medinan verses also include the corrupted belief of the People of the Book and the various tactics which they employed to fight against the Muslims. According to Qutb many of these elements are profoundly described in the *Sūrat al-Baqara*, *Āli-Imrān*, *al-Nisā'* and *al-Mā'ida*. Among them are:

Have you any hope that they will be true to you when a party of them used to listen to the Word of Allah, then used to change it, after they had understood it, knowingly? And when they fall in with those who believe, they say: "We believe". But when they go apart one with another they say: "Shall you (the Jews) tell them (the Muslims) what Allah has disclosed to you that they may contend with you concerning it before your Lord?" Have you then no sense? Are they then unaware that Allah knows that which they keep hidden and that which they proclaim. Among them are unlettered people who do not know the Book except from false desire and they but guess. And woe to those who write the Book with their hands and then say, "This is from Allah," that they may purchase a small gain therewith. Woe unto them for that their hands have written, and woe to them for that they earn thereby.⁵⁵

Say: O people of the Book! Why disbelieve in the revelations of Allah, when Allah Himself is witness of what you do? Say: O people of the Book! Why do you drive back those who have believed from the Path of Allah, seeking to make it seem crooked, while you are witnesses (to Allah's guidance)? Allah is

⁵³Qur'ān, 43: 63-65.

⁵⁴Qur'ān, 42:14. See also Qur'ān, 7:161-163, 167, 169.

⁵⁵Qur'ān, 2:75-79.

not unaware of what you do.⁵⁶

Have you not seen those who were given a portion of the Book, they believe in idols and false deities, and how they say to disbelievers: "They are more rightly guided than those who believe?"⁵⁷

There are two major factors which contributed to the commandment of fighting against the People of the Book which can be implied from Qutb's point of view.

i) difference of ideology

Verses 29-34 of *Sūrat al-Tawba* clearly command the Muslims to fight against the People of the Book. Commenting on these verses, Qutb holds that the reason why they disbelieve in Allah and the Last Day, and refuse to follow and acknowledge the religion of Islam is because they claim that Jesus and ʿUzayr are sons of God. They give authority to priests and rabbis over Allah in legislation and also they aim to exterminate Islam.⁵⁸ All these attributes and natures which are possessed by the People of the Book make it impossible for both ideologies to exist together (*ʿadam al-taʿāyush*) in the sense of governing the affairs of the people as required by Islam. As mentioned before, the aim of Muslims is to establish the system of Allah which they believe will free human beings from being slaves of other human beings. This clearly contradicts the aim of the People of the Book which promotes the method of *jāhiliyya*.

⁵⁶Qur'ān, 3:98-99.

⁵⁷Qur'ān, 4:51. See also *Qur'ān*, 2:87-91, 5:72-75, 7:159 and 3:112-115.

⁵⁸Qutb, *Zilāl*, vol.3, p.1632.

For Qutb, this important difference inevitably leads to the confrontation between both sides as featured in history.⁵⁹

With regards to the question of Ezra being the son of God, Qutb holds that this notion is not known to the people nowadays. Some claim that Ezra was an expert in the Torah who rewrote it after its extinction. This is evident from certain sacred books of Jews with his name on. Although Qutb does not suggest that all Jews were guilty of this deification, he still believes that some of them, especially the Jews of Medina, considered Ezra as the son of God.⁶⁰ Al-Mawdūdī also hold similar opinion, saying,

The Jews consider Ezra (450 B.C.) to be the reviver of their faith. According to their tradition, it was Ezra who compiled the Torah and revived the Law which had been lost in the dark period following the death of the Prophet Solomon. As a result of their captivity in Babylon the Jews had become oblivious to their Scripture, Law, traditions and national language - Hebrew. The Jews hold Ezra in great esteem for his revival of their faith. Some Jewish sects, however, revered Ezra to the point of deifying him, some even considering him the son of God.⁶¹

With regards to the corruption in Christianity, Qutb focuses his discussion on the doctrine of Trinity. He quoted Ridā who states that this doctrine is the teaching of the Catholic, Orthodox and Protestant churches. Ridā argues that the word "trinity" does not exist in the Old Testament and the Christians also cannot produce even one verse from the Old Testament to prove their claim. Although the scholars of the Bible

⁵⁹*Ibid*, vol.3, p.1633.

⁶⁰*Ibid*, vol.3, p.1635.

⁶¹Al-Mawdūdī, Sayyid Abul A'lā, *Towards Understanding the Qur'ān*, vol.3, trans. by Zafar Ishaq Ansari, The Islamic Foundation, Leicester, 1990, p.203.

verse from the Old Testament to prove their claim. Although the scholars of the Bible were able to produce many verses which show the three forming in one person, they are still, as Rida argues, subject to various interpretations. Therefore, it cannot be evidence for this doctrine.⁶² In the verse which says, "...These are merely verbal assertions in imitation of the sayings of those unbelievers who preceded them",⁶³ Qutb quotes the Muslim exegetes as saying that this verse means that the claiming of the Christians and the Jews of the sonship of Jesus and Ezra respectively, is similar to the polytheists who claim that the angels are the daughters of Allah. Qutb claims that the doctrine of the sonship of God is also the teaching of Hinduism, ancient Egypt and Greece. Thus, he believes that the Christians and Jews developed their doctrine as a result of the influence of these societies. The Hindus regard Vishnu as a son who emanated from Brahma (God). When a Greek priest wanted to perform slaughter, he would splash the animal with sacred water three times, then would take fume with three fingers and splash the crowd with sacred water three times as a symbol of trinity.⁶⁴

Another aspect of their corrupted belief, according to Qutb, is that the priests

⁶²Many Christians argue that this doctrine can be found in (John, 14:11), "But God and Jesus are one. Believe me that I am in the Father and the Father in me." However in John 17:21, "That they (the disciples) all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, they may also be one in us....". In the light of both verses, Baagil states "It is clear here that God and Jesus are one, but also the disciples are one in Jesus and God. If Jesus is God because he is in God, why are the disciples then not God, as they are like Jesus also in God? If God, Jesus and the Holy Ghost form one unit of Trinity, then with the disciples included they should form a God unit of fifteen." See Baagil, H.M (M.D.), *Christian Muslim Dialogue*, Islamic Propagation Centre International (UK), Birmingham, 1984, p.20.

⁶³Qur'ān, 9:30.

⁶⁴Qutb, *Zilāl*, vol.3, p.1640.

and rabbis are given rights of legislation similar to God. This act is considered to be "associating Allah with others." In fact, they become like those who believe that Jesus is the son of God. He quoted al-Alūsī⁶⁵ who says that according to the Muslim exegesists, the meaning is not that the Christians and Jews consider their priests and rabbis as the God of heaven and earth, but, rather, that they obey their judgement on lawful and unlawful matters.⁶⁶ Quṭb quotes a famous *hadīth* in order to justify this opinion:

Tirmidhī has reported on the authority of ʿAdī ibn Hātim that when the Prophet's message reached him, he ran away to Syria (he had accepted Christianity before the Prophet's time), but his sister and some of the people of his tribe became prisoners of war. The Prophet treated his sister kindly and gave her some gifts. She went back to her brother and invited him to Islam, and advised him to visit the Prophet. ʿAdī agreed to this. The people were very anxious to see him come to Medina. When he came into the presence of the Prophet, he was wearing a silver cross. The Prophet was reciting the verse, "They (the People of the Book) have taken their rabbis and priests as lords other than God". ʿAdī reports: "I said, They do not worship their priests." God's Messenger replied, "Whatever their priests and rabbis call permissible, they accept as permissible, whatever they declare as forbidden, they consider as forbidden, and thus, they worship them".⁶⁷

From the above discussion, Quṭb concludes that obedience to laws and judgements is a sort of worship, and anyone who does this is considered out of this religion. Their position is no different whatsoever from those who associate others

⁶⁵Al-Alūsī, Shihāb al-Dīn al-Sayyid Maḥmūd, *Ruḥ al-Maʿānī*, vol.5, Dār al-Kutub al-ʿIlmīya, Beirut, 1994, p.276. Baagil, H.M (M.D.), *Christian Muslim Dialogue*, Islamic Propagation Centre International (UK), Birmingham, 1984, p.20.

⁶⁶*Ibid*, vol.3, p.1642.

⁶⁷Wensinck, A.J., *Concordance et Indices de la Tradition Musulmane*, vol.3, Cagri Yayinlari, Istanbul, 1988, p.334. See also al-Alūsī, *Ruḥ al-Maʿānī*, vol.5, p.276.

with Allah in His deity and their objects of worship(*taqdīm al-sha'ā'ir al-ta'abbudiyya*).⁶⁸ This is because the Prophet clearly stated that according to the *Sharī'a*, "to obey" is "to worship."⁶⁹

ii) hostility towards the Muslims

Qutb maintains that the Qur'ān whether mentioning Jews and Christians alone or together with the polytheists clearly describes their aim as being to oppose and destroy the Muslims in the sense that they will strive to convert the Muslims to Christianity or Judaism. The justification used by Qutb centers around the following Qur'ānic texts:

Never will the Jews nor the Christians be pleased with you till you follow their religion...⁷⁰

A party of the People of the Book wish to lead you astray....⁷¹

O you who believe! If you obey a group of those who were given the Book, they will make you disbelievers after your belief.⁷²

Historically, Qutb claims that achieving this aim probably dominated their attitude towards the Muslims. This can be seen from the series of measures taken by

⁶⁸*Ibid*, vol.3, p.1642.

⁶⁹Qutb, *Milestones*, p.107.

⁷⁰Qur'ān, 2:120.

⁷¹Qur'ān, 3:69.

⁷²Qur'ān, 3:100. See also Qur'ān, 2:105,109, 3:72-73, 4:44-45, 51.

the message brought by the Prophet, was followed by their distortion of the story about the changing of *qibla* (direction of prayer) and their involvement in the event which is known as *ḥadīth al-'ifk* (the slander story). The Jewish tribes of the Banī Qaynuqā', Banī Nadīr, Banī Qurayza and Banī Khaybar, also broke their covenant with the Prophet, and were involved in helping the polytheists in the Battle of the Trench.⁷³

Qutb accuses the Jews of being responsible to the enmity between 'Alī and Mu'āwīya, the spreading of false *ḥadīth*, *sīra* (the biography of the Prophet Muḥammad) and the narrations of the exegetes. According to Qutb, they also contributed to the conquest of Baghdad by the Mongols and to the collapse of the Islamic Caliphate. Qutb also accuses them of masterminding the oppression of Muslims all over the world.⁷⁴

Qutb argues that the Christians were also not much different from a historical point of view in their hostility towards the Muslims. The Romans and Persians who were at one time enemies to each other, after realizing the threat posed by the Muslims united in order to fight against the Muslims. The battle of Mu'ta was also initiated by the Christians who, according to Qutb, executed al-Harīth ibn 'Umayr al-Azdī, the Prophet's envoy to Buṣrā. This forced the Prophet to send troops to fight

⁷³Qutb, *Zilāl*, vol.3, p.1642. All these well-known events are referred to in the *sīra* literature.

⁷⁴*Ibid*, vol.3, p.1628.

against the Romans. Qutb also claims that the well-known confrontation between Islam and Christianity, the Crusades, is evidence of the church's animosity towards Islam. For Qutb, the root of the Crusades can be traced from the time when the Romans ended their enmity towards the Persians. The Romans began to support the Persians in fighting against Islam in the northern part of the Arabian Peninsula. Then, the crusade against Islam continued when they launched the campaign in the Battles of Mu'ta and Yarmūk, and later on in Andalusia when millions of Muslims were massacred. This campaign, for Qutb, did not stop at this point, but continued in the East. Qutb also believes that the persecution of Muslims in Zanzibar, Cyprus, Ethiopia, and Kenya, and their activities in the southern part of Sudan are a continuation of the Crusades against the Muslims.⁷⁵

From his understanding of the West from a Qur'ānic perspective, Qutb believes that the issues between the West and Muslim countries are predominantly a religious struggle in which the Christians and Jews attempt by a variety of methods to undermine the Muslims' commitment to Islam.

It is the eternal doctrine which we see verified in every time and place.... This is the reality of the battle which the Jews and the Christians initiate in every land and at all times against the Islamic community.... It is the battle of doctrine that is raging between the Islamic camp and these two armies who may [at times] fight among themselves..... however, they always cooperate in the battle against Islam and the Muslims. It is the battle of the doctrine in its essence and reality, yet the two veteran camps of enmity to Islam and the Muslims colour it in various ways and raise different banners over it in calumny, cunning and concealment. They have experienced the Muslims' zeal for their religion and their doctrine when they faced them under the banner of

⁷⁵*Ibid.*

doctrine. After that, the enemies turned around and changed the signs of the battle. They did not announce it as a war in the name of doctrine - as it is in reality - fearing the zeal and emotion of the doctrine. Rather, they announced it in the name of land, of economics, of politics, of military bases.... whatever. They proclaimed to those who were gullible among us that the issue of doctrine is an old story that has no meaning. It is no longer advisable to raise its banner nor to wage war in its name. That is the sign of the fanatical reactionaries! That is in order to allay the outpouring of zeal for the doctrine.... While in themselves: International Zionism, International Crusaderism - in addition to International Communism - all of them enter the battle primarily and above all else to destroy this mighty rock which they have long butted and which has bloodied all of them. It is the battle of the doctrine. It is not a struggle over land, produce or military bases nor is it any of these false banners. They falsify it to us because of a secret purpose they keep to themselves in order to deceive us about the nature and essence of the battle and if we are deceived by their treachery we can blame only ourselves.⁷⁶

⁷⁶*Ibid*, vol.1, p.108. This quotation is cited from Yvonne Y.Haddad. See Haddad, Yvonne Y., *Sayyid Qutb: Ideologue of Islamic Revival*, In Esposito, John L., *Voices of Resurgent*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 1983, p.80-81.

CONCLUSION

Qutb's ideas on *jihād* in particular and other subjects in general are a result of a mixture of his background and his growing frustration with the crises of the contemporary social, political, and economic environment of Egypt. His early upbringing in a religious family contributed to his interest in Islamic subjects and affairs. This early religious upbringing faded away slowly after he moved to Cairo until his study in America changed his direction from one who was literature orientated to one interested in Islamic affairs. This however, does not ignore other factors which also contributed to his change of direction such as his parents' death, his failure in love, his long-suffering illness and the influence of senior literary figures in Egypt who began to write about Islamic subjects. Qutb's involvement in Islamic causes entered into a new dimension when he joined *al-Ikhwān al-Muslimūn*, which eventually cost him his life. There is no doubt that all these factors had an influence on his writing of *Fī Zilāl al-Qur'ān*.

Among the many works Qutb produced, the *Zilāl*, which has been translated into several other languages, is considered his masterpiece. Certainly, his background in literary criticism greatly helped him in presenting and writing the *Zilāl*. Nevertheless, people like J.G.Jansen deny that the book is a work of Qur'ānic commentary, stating that it is "rather an enormous collection of sermons".¹ However,

¹Jansen, J.G., *The interpretation of the Koran in Modern Egypt*, Leiden: E.J.Brill, 1974, p.79.

Qutb's approach in the *Zilāl* is an example of modern trends in *tafsīr* where the Qur'ān is not approached from "purely scholarly interest". Qutb himself admits that he tried to avoid being engaged excessively in philological, philosophical or jurisprudential arguments. The aim is rather to induce and appeal to people to reform themselves and their societies on the basis of faith which manifests in the third edition of *Zilāl*, consisting of some ecstatic and almost visionary ideas about mankind and about the Qur'ān in general. Its message is that to study the Qur'ān from a purely scholarly point of view gives one nowhere near a realization of the meaning of the Qur'ān, instead it gives one only knowledge of details. It should be noted here that Qutb's jail experience resulted in a notable difference between the first and the last two editions of the *Zilāl* and his view on *jihād*.

As far as *jihād* is concerned, Qutb does not depart to a great extent from classical doctrine. In order to explain and support his argument, he refers to and quotes the works of traditional Muslim scholars such as al-Ṭabarī and al-Alūsī in *tafsīr*, al-Bukhārī and Muslim in *hadīth*, Ibn al-Qayyim and Ibn Ḥanbal in legal aspects, and Ibn Kathīr in history. The main difference is probably the way he presents these ideas which is distinctively different from his predecessors.

It is clear that Qutb's view on *jihād* was intended to address the Muslims in general and those who working for Islam in particular. Thus, one of the obvious features in his discussion is his criticism towards the widespread distortion of *jihād*

propagated not only by some Westerners but also by many Muslims. According to Qutb, *jihād* in Islam has been regarded by Westerners as nothing less than war which is fought for political and economical interests. Qutb also accuses them of representing *jihād* as barbaric and savage. Rejecting this accusation, Qutb insists that the fundamental principle of *jihād* is the need of performing *jihād* "in the way of Allah" (*fī sabīli llah*). In other words, one should perform *jihād* solely for Allah and not for other worldly interests, and observe the laws of fighting enjoined by the Qur'ān and *hadīth* which clearly forbid killing innocent people who do not participate directly in the fighting such as women, children and priests. If not, the *jihād* is futile and rejected by Allah. This, to him, distinguishes *jihād* from other forms of fighting which are driven by worldly interests.

Another misunderstanding about *jihād* is the confusion caused to Muslims as a result of the Western attacks which accuse Islam of being a religion of the sword, asserting that it was spread by violence. Scholars like Ridā and Muḥammad Darwazah, Muslims whom Qutb regards as "defeated Muslims", in their zeal to defend Islam against these vicious attacks, undermined the place of *jihād* in Islam by restricting its sphere of application and by apologetically stating that *jihād* is permitted only for defensive purposes. Quoting Ibn al-Qayyim, Qutb, based on the concept of piecemeal directives, believes that the final stage of *jihād* after the Prophet's time is both offensive and defensive. However, he makes an exception in the case of inability of the Muslims to fight due to legitimate reasons. Thus, the state of the Muslims as far

as *jihād* is concerned depends largely on their situation. Should they be unable to fight against an enemy, preparation should be undertaken until that state of offensive *jihād* is achieved.

Recognizing the misunderstanding and false accusations about *jihād* among those who are studying *jihād*, Quṭb lists three main aims of *jihād* in order to repudiate these false claims. Firstly, *jihād* is proclaimed to guarantee Muslims their freedom of belief and right for life and wealth wherever they are. He considers that persecution on religious grounds means assaulting the sacred things in human life. Secondly, *jihād* is employed in order to guarantee the spread of *daʿwa*. Thirdly, the most important reason is establishing an Islamic system where *sharīʿa* becomes the law of society, and Allah's sovereignty is substituted for the domination of man over man. For Quṭb, the role of *jihād* is not only to guarantee freedom of belief and the spread of *daʿwa* but more importantly to establish the Islamic system for the benefit of all people, both Muslims and non-Muslims alike. Thus, *jihād* is a struggle for the initiation and establishment of this system which aims at securing freedom of conscience and belief for every person on earth. He bases his argument on the premise that the role of Islam as the last divinely-revealed guidance for mankind is that it has a duty, and therefore the right, to establish its particular system as preeminent on earth in order that the whole of mankind may benefit from its just, balanced and humane laws and so that every individual living under this system may enjoy freedom of belief. This system can only be implemented effectively with the creation of an Islamic state and then an

Islamic caliphate. To Qutb, this is the *jihād* of the twentieth century which he thinks those working for Islam should concentrate on because Muslim society nowadays is in a state of what he calls "*jāhiliyya*," meaning that the society is dominated by the law of human beings rather than the divinely-appointed *Sharīʿa*. By so doing, Qutb expands the concept of *jihād* to include not only offensive and defensive capabilities in war, but also the establishment of Islam in society, seen as a duty for all Muslims. This clearly adds a dimension of engagement in *jihād* in Muslim society today which is, according to Qutb, governed by tyrannical rulers.

As *jihād* can be both offensive and defensive, Qutb has no doubt that *jihād* should be declared against the polytheists and the People of the Book when the Muslims are capable of doing that. He rejects the claim that the basic principle of relationship between the Muslims and the unbelievers is unconditional peace. If this were so, he argues, this would mean that the Muslims are forbidden from ever declaring war on any unbelievers. He asserts that *jihād* against the unbelievers is in fact based on the difference of belief which makes it inconceivable for other ideologies to come to terms with Islam in governing the lives of the people. Qutb, basing his argument on Qur'ānic verses, insists that the unbelievers' permanent enmity towards Muslims also justifies *jihād* against them.

Qutb reminds the Muslims, especially those working for Islam, that *jihād* needs people as well as wealth. Only those who have firm faith are willing to sacrifice their lives and enjoyment for the sake of *jihād*. All these requirements and others confirm

that *jihād* is a test for every Muslim. Often the fear of losing their lives, families and wealth has prompted people to avoid *jihād*. Thus, before indulging in any fight against the enemy, each Muslim, in order to keep his faith strong, should fight against his desires and Satan who is always a stumbling block to performing *jihād*. Faith also enables Muslims to see the wisdom of *jihād* which requires them to solve the problems of humanity through the establishment of an Islamic system. Only people with full faith will respond to the call of *jihād* which offers Paradise and success.

The success of the first generation of Islam prompted Qutb to believe that achieving the aims of *jihād*, especially establishing an Islamic system, requires the *mujāhidīn* to have the same qualities as the Prophet's Companions. The qualities which emanate from firm faith enable the *mujāhidīn* to remain steadfast and persevere in the path of *jihād* from the beginning until the end. For Qutb, mere worship is insufficient to guarantee the success of Muslims because, as they are also bound by the law of nature, the qualities of the Muslims and the preparations made for becoming *mujāhidīn* are an important element which will decide the outcome of the fight. Success, defeat and martyrdom should become a motivation for every worker for Islam in his struggle. As practiced by the Prophet, these elements became a powerful tool in driving the Companions to participate in *jihād*.

There has been a growing trend among Western scholars to categorize certain individuals and groups in the Muslim community under various groups representing

their reaction to the role of Islam in the modern world. Most Western scholars and a few Muslim researchers studying Qutb's thought regard him as belonging to the "fundamentalist" group. This is probably true judging from the similarity of his views, which clearly feature in his works, to alleged prominent "fundamentalist" figures such as Ibn Ḥanbal, Ibn Taymiyya, Ibn al-Qayyim, Ibn Kathīr, Ibn ʿAbd al-Wahhāb, Shah Walī Allah, Ḥasan al-Bannā and al-Mawdūdī. As Dekmejian states,

.... Qutb's ideas and style betrayed the unmistakable influence of earlier Islamist theorists. For example, in his opposition to philosophical abstractions and emphasis on the literal interpretation of Islamic precepts, Qutb followed the precedents established by Ibn Ḥazm and Ibn Taymiyyah and his disciples. Among twentieth-century writers, Ḥasan al-Banna and al-Mawdūdī were particularly influential in shaping Qutb's theories.²

Although it is difficult to judge his position as a "fundamentalist" depending solely on his *Zilāl*, significant ideas of Ibn Qayyim, Ibn Kathīr and al-Mawdūdī on *jihād*, such as the concept of piecemeal directives and offensive *jihād*, were undoubtedly adopted and often quoted by Qutb. The difference probably lies in Qutb's style of presentation which is much more appealing to the modern reader judging from Qutb's background and orientation to literary criticism.

However, this schematization, especially the "fundamentalist" category, has been challenged by some scholars in the Western and Muslim world alike due to the origin of the term. Fundamentalism is a term applied mainly by Westerners "to those

²Dekmejian, R. Hrair, *Islam in Revolution*, Syracuse University Press, 1985, p.39. See also Rippin, Andrew, *Muslims : Their Religious Beliefs and Practices Volume 2: The Contemporary Period*, Routledge, London, 1993, p.29-30.

who call for strict implementation of the *Sharīʿa*, including the call for an Islamic state".³ This term was initially borrowed from the conservative United States Protestant movement in the 1920s who propagated a literal interpretation of the Bible and strove against modernism and liberalism. Beinin in this regard states,

".. it makes no sense to speak of fundamentalist Islam because one of the core elements of the creed of all believing Muslims is that the Qur'ān is the literal (hence absolutely true) word of God.... the divine origin of the text has never been a topic of legitimate debate".⁴

Rippin, who has studied this term extensively, also expresses his reservation on all the terms used and states,

It must be remembered that these are theoretical categories only; people in the realities of their life situations, can rarely, if ever, be fitted neatly into one position or other.⁵

This problematic term of "fundamentalists" leads to its misuse especially by the media, among whom it "signifies abhorrent extremism and religious narrow-mindedness".⁶

Khurshid Ahmad also criticizes the trend and states,

the West is once again committing the fatal mistake of looking upon others belonging to a different paradigm from the prism of its own distorted categories of thought and history.⁷

³Rippin, *Muslims*, p.38.

⁴Beinin, Joel, *Political Islam*, ed.by Joel beinin and Joe Stork, I.B. Tauris Publishers, London, 1997, p.3.

⁵Rippin, *Muslims*, p.28.

⁶Bannerman, Patrick, *Islam in Perspective*, Routledge, London, p.155

⁷Ahmad, Khurshid, *The Nature of the Islamic Resurgence*, in *Voices of Resurgent Islam*, ed.by Esposito, L.John, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 1983, p.225.

Muslim writers, however, usually identify a person or a group of people within the Muslim society as being either *fiqhī*, philological, philosophical, *sufī*, revivalist or reformative (*mujaddid*). In the light of this, Qutb may be considered as one of the representatives of revivalist thought following the line of al-Bannā and al-Mawdūdī.⁸ Qutb's thought is characterized by propagating comprehensive reform in Muslim society where faith becomes its yardstick. His works also attempt to show the relevance of faith for individual morality as well as for social ethics, political life, and the establishment of a just social order. Often people assume that this is a result of political, social and even some claim, Western intrusion. However, one should understand that Qutb's thought is primarily a product of religious consciousness. Khurshid Ahmad in describing this phenomenon states,

Islamic resurgence is primarily an internal, indigenous, positive and ideological movement within Muslim society. It is bound to come into contact, even clash with forces in the international arena. The close contact of the West, particularly through colonial rule is relevant but not the most important factor in producing the Islamic response.⁹

⁸Ahmad, Khurshid, *Islamic Resurgence*, p.222.

⁹*Ibid*, p.228. See also Peters, Rudolph, *Islam and Colonialism*, p.164.

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